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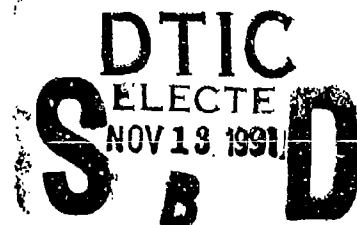
GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER'S
MISSIONS IN CHINA, 1944-1947:
AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by
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1991

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER'S MISSIONS IN CHINA, 1944-1947:
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by CPT Alexander H. Von Plinsky, III, 118 pages.

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During this period Wedemeyer served first as the Theater Commander and Chief of Staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (November 1944-April 1946), and then as a Presidential Envoy to China (July-September 1947). He faced innumerable challenges in attempting to accomplish his missions. This thesis will examine the problems he faced, the approach he took toward solving them, and the results he produced.

Wedemeyer's problems are well chronicled in many works by and about the figures involved in this tragic history. This contribution attempts to view the situation primarily from Wedemeyer's point of view, while remaining sufficiently objective to analyze his performance and extract lessons learned. These are lessons that may be of value to officers involved in similar current and future operations in foreign nations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

During the passing of the recent bicentennial of the United States Constitution; military officers were reminded of their ties to that document. As a professional fraternity they are subservient to the direction of the President who is empowered to act as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Throughout our history as a nation, certain military officers have been deeply involved in the formulation of political-military strategy and policy. Because of their training, experience, and proven sound judgment, their opinions were readily sought out by Presidents on matters ranging from purely military to those more political in nature.

This thesis presents a case study of one such officer, General Albert Coady Wedemeyer. His performance allowed him to achieve positions in the mid-1940's that gave him the ability to influence the formulation and execution of national policy regarding China. The focus will be on his performance as the Commander of the China

Theater of Operations (from 1944-1946) and as the Presidential Envoy to China (from July-December 1947). The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the performance of Wedemeyer in these two positions and assess his accomplishments.

Chapter One presents the historical background of the events examined in this study and discusses Wedemeyer's personal and professional preparation for his assignments in China. This will include a brief synopsis of his career prior to his assignment as the Theater Commander. Chapter Two discusses the complexities of the Chinese political and military situation and the major Chinese personalities that affected Wedemeyer's mission. It looks at their respective stakes in the war against the Japanese and their preparation for the post World War II civil war in China.

Chapter Three focuses on the conduct of World War II in the China Theater and highlights the positive impact Americans made on the condition, composition and attitude of the Chinese Army. Chapter Four looks at the state of affairs in China from V-J Day through Wedemeyer's departure from China in the Spring of 1946.

Chapter Five examines the return of Wedemeyer to China as the Special Envoy of President Truman. Attention is given to the mission, recommendations, and outcome of this effort. Chapter Six summarizes the thesis in terms of lessons learned and conclusions for the officer of today.

General Albert Coady Wedemeyer had a long and distinguished career in the Army. His thirty-two years of service spanned decades of rapid change in the country and in the armed services. From a relatively common background he rose to high rank in the Army and became a major force in the shaping of national policy on China.

GEN Wedemeyer was born in Omaha, Nebraska, and came from a family line that included several military men. His grandfather, Wilhelm Wedemeyer, fought in the Civil War. His father, Albert Anthony Wedemeyer, fought in the Spanish American War and his older brother served as a National Guardsman in World War I.¹

Upon taking a commission in the Infantry in November 1918, Wedemeyer and his West Point class went to study the battlefields of Europe in the recently completed World War. His class was graduated six months early on a wartime acceleration basis. When the armistice came before they were needed to serve, the class went and studied the various battlegrounds, then returned to be commissioned a second time in a traditional graduation ceremony in June 1919. Wedemeyer was then posted in a variety of locations throughout the United States and had several tours in the Far East. On one of those tours - from June 1929 through Mar 1931 - he was posted with the 15th Infantry in Tientsin, China.²

TABLE 1
Biographical Data (Partial)
GEN Albert Coady Wedemeyer (061-28-6345)

DATE OF BIRTH/PLACE OF BIRTH:

09 July 1896, Omaha, Nebraska

YEARS OF ACTIVE COMMISSIONED SERVICE: 32

EDUCATION (MILITARY):

BS-Engineering, United States Military Academy
U.S. Army Infantry School (USAIS)
U.S. Army Command & General Staff College (USACGSC)
German War College (Die Kriegsakademie)

DUTY ASSIGNMENTS:

1919-1922....Student, Fort Benning, GA
Aide-de-Camp to BG Malone, Cmdt. USAIS
1922-1923....Fort Sam Houston, TX, Aide to BG Malone
1923-1925....Fort McKinley, Phillipines, 31st Inf
1925-1927....Fort Washington, MD, assd. to 12th Inf.
1927-1929....Washington, DC, assd as Aide to CG, MDW
1930-1932....Tientsin, China, assd. to 15th Infantry
1932-1934....Corregidor, Phillipine Islands, assd. as
Aide to MG Kilbourne and MG Embick
1934-1936....Fort Leavenworth, KS student at USACGSC
1936-1938....Berlin, Germany, student at German War
College (Die Kriegsakademie)
1938-1940....Fort Benning, GA assd. to 29th Infantry &
94th Antitank Battalion
1940-1941....Washington, DC assd. to Training Section,
Office of the Chief of Infantry
1941-1943....Washington, DC assd. as Member, Combined
Subjects Section, Deputy Chief & Chief
Strategy and Policy Group, Operations Div.
War Department General Staff
1943-1944....New Delhi, India assd. as Deputy Chief of
Staff, Southeast Asia Command (SEAC)
1944-1946....Chungking, China assd. as Commander, China
Theater of Operations
1946-1947....Baltimore, MD assd. as CG, Second Army
1947-1949....Washington, DC assd as Deputy Chief of
Staff for Plans and Operations, U.S. Army
1949-1951....Presidio of San Francisco, CA assd. as
Commanding General, Sixth Army

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS (Selected):

Distinguished Service Medal (US) (with 2 OLC)
Commander of the Bath (Great Britain)
Order of the White Sun and Blue Sky (China)
Grand Cross - Order of the Phoenix (Greece)
Polonia Restitude Commander's Cross (Poland)
Order of Military Merit (Brazil)
Presidential Medal of Freedom (US)

Source: Department of the Army, General Officer Management
Office, Washington, DC.

Wedemeyer studied at Fort Leavenworth from June 1934 through June 1936, completing the two-year Command and General Staff School Course near the top of his class. He was next posted in the Intelligence Division of the War Department in Washington, DC, where his scholarship and knowledge of the German language came to the attention of the General Staff.³ He was chosen in short order, to fill a vacancy as a student in the upcoming class at the German Kriegsakademie, the German War College, in Berlin. From July 1936 through August 1938, he studied and toured Germany, learning the advanced state of their preparedness for war both militarily and industrially.

Upon returning to the United States he was posted to Fort Benning, Georgia. He celebrated his first twenty years of service to the Army as a Captain with more than fifteen years service as a lieutenant! In September 1940, he returned to Washington and by mid-1941 was assigned to the War Plans Division of the War Department. It was here that Wedemeyer was to gain the favor of one of his foremost mentors, GEN George C. Marshall, who was then the Army Chief of Staff (Table 2).

As the clouds of war grew on the horizon, Wedemeyer and the rest of the Combined Subjects Section of the War Department General Staff were tasked to draft a plan for the mobilization of the United States Army to fight the Axis powers. The resultant "Victory Plan", of which

TABLE 2
Principal U.S. Officials 1944-1947
(Political and Military)

President of the United States:

Franklin Roosevelt (- April 1945)

Harry Truman (April 1945 -)

Secretary of State:

Cordell Hull (- November 1944)

Edward Stettinius (November 1944 - June 1945)

James Byrnes (July 1945 - January 1947)

George Marshall (January 1947 -)

Ambassadors to China:

Clarence Gauss (- December 1944)

Patrick Hurley (December 1944 - November 1945)

George Marshall (November 1945 - June 1946)

Leighton Stuart (July 1946 -)

Secretary of War:

Henry Stimson (- September 1945)

Robert P. Patterson (September 1945 - July 1947)

Secretary of Defense: (Established July 1947)

James Forrestal (September 1947 -)

Secretary of the Army: (Established July 1947)

Kenneth C. Royall (September 1947 -)

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army:

George Marshall (- November 1945)

Dwight Eisenhower (November 1945 -)

Source: United States Department of State White Paper on China, 1949. 559-563.

Wedemeyer is considered the primary author, became the blueprint the United States used in World War II.⁴ He became the Chief of the Strategy and Policy Division in June 1942 and celebrated the month of July that year with yet another promotion this time to Brigadier General. This capped a two year period that saw him rise from Captain to Brigadier General.⁵

During the next two years Wedemeyer participated in all the major Allied strategy conferences and briefed Allied leaders on several occasions. His exposure to the highest levels of the military and civilian government allowed him to further develop and display the forthright and confident manner that marked his performance throughout his career. His abilities and demonstrated performance were recognized in early 1943 with the award of the Distinguished Service Medal. The citation in part reads,

"By his outstanding ability, resourcefulness, tact, initiative and profound strategical judgment, he contributed in large measure to the adoption by the United States and by the United Nations (Allied Powers) of sound strategical plans which have formed the basis for the successful prosecution of the war on all fronts".⁶

In August 1943 Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to establish the Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) to improve cooperation in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten was named the Commander and LTG Joseph Stilwell the Deputy Commander. In October 1943, Wedemeyer was promoted to Major General and assigned as the

Deputy Chief of Staff for this new organization. This began a friendship with Mountbatten that lasted more than thirty-six years. A year after Wedemeyer's arrival, CBI was divided into the China Theater and the Burma-India Theater. In October of 1944, Wedemeyer was chosen to succeed GEN Stilwell in command of the China Theater, and also as the Chief of Staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

It is important to focus on the Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) for a moment and see how the Chinese theater fit into the grand scheme of the war effort worldwide. When Wedemeyer received his posting to SEAC in 1943, he shared the feelings of the SEAC Commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten, that SEAC was "the political and military backwater of the war effort."⁷ As subsequent facts were to bear out, it was the lowest priority theater of operations in the Allied effort. Early years of the war saw the Allies with very few assets on hand to stem the tide of Japanese aggression. As the war production capacity of the United States increased, the trickle of supplies to the theater also increased. It was then up to the leaders to plan for and prioritize the use of the supplies and manpower they had parceled out to them.

The British focus in SEAC was the defense and liberation of its colonies in the region, primarily, India,

Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Though the loss of Hong Kong was felt deeply, the British knew that realistic operations against the Japanese to regain it were impossible in 1943 and even in late 1944. By the end of 1944 they were making great strides in Burma under the superb leadership of General William Slim and had turned the corner in their tactical battle there. They had the use of two Chinese Divisions in Burma that were fed, clothed and under the operational control of the British Commanders in Burma. These two divisions fought well and served as a model for Wedemeyer on which to pattern the reformation of other Chinese Divisions.*

The other major Allied Power at the time, Russia, also had definite interests in China, namely Manchuria and its mineral and industrial potential. The Russians however, had not declared war against the Japanese. In fact there was a Russo-Japanese non-aggression pact in existence at the time, which allowed each country to focus their wartime attentions elsewhere. Later agreements at Yalta in early 1945, would identify specific Russian interests in China but they were not so obvious in late 1944.

United States objectives in SEAC overall were tied to aiding Britain and China in their actual operations against the Japanese. While there were American ground

forces (Merrill's Marauders) and air forces (Chennault's Flying Tigers) in the region who acquitted themselves valiantly against the Japanese, the vast majority of ground combatants in SEAC were Chinese and British units.

It is interesting to note that Wedemeyer was posted to the Far East in spite of his unparalleled knowledge of contemporary Germany and the Nazi war machine. This was a decision made by President Roosevelt that begs further explanation. In September 1941, most of the work on the Victory Plan had been completed and the plan had been briefed to the President. Then mysteriously, certain facets of the plan dealing with mobilization of millions of civilians and major portions of American industry, were leaked to a Chicago newspaper who printed some of the facts in a front page story on December 4, 1941. Roosevelt, who had made it a point to posture himself publicly as being opposed to U.S. entry into the war, was embarrassed.

An investigation was conducted by the FBI and though Wedemeyer was initially under suspicion, he was finally exonerated. Marshall stood staunchly by Wedemeyer throughout the inquiry. Roosevelt however, remained unconvinced, according to Marshall. As a result Roosevelt forbade the assignment of Wedemeyer to the European Theater of Operations.*

For the Nationalist Chinese, the arrival of Wedemeyer as Stilwell's replacement was an opportunity to

try to convince the Americans of their resolve to support the Allied effort against the Japanese. Chiang Kai-shek had not been able to impress Stilwell who was convinced that the Chinese were not capable of waging modern war. The Chinese had been pushed around and had yielded large portions of their country to the Japanese. The only success the Chinese troops had experienced during Stilwell's time as Commander had come in Burma under British direction. The Chinese felt they had an opportunity to make a clean start under Wedemeyer and possibly secure an increase in Lend-Lease supplies as well.

An elaborate welcome ceremony was planned at the Kunming Airport and as the estimated time of Wedemeyer's arrival approached, tension amongst the Chinese welcoming delegation was high. They wanted everything to go well. The first plane spotted making an approach to the airport was a lumbering transport that was directed to a warehouse site on the opposite side of the airfield from the welcome ceremony site. Surely the Commander of the China Theater would be arriving in a suitable command aircraft with fighter escort, reasoned the Chinese.

Meanwhile on the far side of the field, Wedemeyer disembarked the transport and hitched a ride to the ceremony on a cargo truck loaded with coolie laborers. Upon arriving at the ceremony, Wedemeyer offered his hand to the Chinese officials with the greeting, 'My name's

Wedemeyer and I'm glad to be here!"¹⁰ This was to be the first of many humble gestures of teamwork and optimism Wedemeyer would display towards his hosts.

Wedemeyer's positive attitude marked a direct departure from that of his predecessor who privately thought very little of Chiang Kai-shek. Stilwell was a leader who prided himself on feeling what the troops felt. If that meant walking miles through the tropical jungles with a heavy pack, so be it. He had labored in the heat of the tropics for the first three years of the Allied involvement there and knew the problems the Allies faced from firsthand experience. He was candid to the point of rudeness at times and that led to his eventual demise.¹¹

Physically Stilwell was not a well man. But he had an enormous amount of institutional knowledge on the situation. Now he was gone! Wedemeyer was somewhat taken aback when Stilwell left before briefing him on the situation he inherited in China. When he asked Stilwell's Chief of Staff, MG Hearn, for copies of any summary documents or plans, he was informed they didn't exist. "General Stilwell kept them all in his head," stated Hearn. All that could be found was a draft of a plan for the evacuation of Kunming.¹²

On a list of Allied priorities in October 1944, the China Theater came last. There were many logistical problems in the theater but solutions were hard to come by.

As things stood in late 1944, the Chinese army was tying down over one million Japanese soldiers (Table 3) in China proper.¹³ By doing so, they were helping the overall conduct of the war in the Pacific. With only a trickle of Lend-Lease supplies to assuage the Chinese, Wedemeyer had to keep them in the fight, and prevent the application of this sizeable number of Japanese reinforcements against Allied forces elsewhere in the Pacific.

When Wedemeyer reported to China on 31 October 1944, U.S. objectives in the theater were translated into the following mission statement:¹⁴

1. Prevent the collapse of the Nationalist Chinese Government.
2. Keep the Chinese in the war against Japan.
3. Harmonize relations between the Chinese and American military.
4. Unify the anti-Japanese forces in China.

The first three parts of the mission are tied together in that the Chinese military was the key to potential stability of the Nationalist government. The army was large and difficult to control and accounted for an enormous portion of the national budget. Furthermore, the army lacked the training necessary to fight effectively against the Japanese. These deficiencies eventually led to the creation of the Chinese Training Command (CTC) which did much to further the efficiency and ability of the

TABLE 3
Japanese Troop Strength
(1944-1945, China Theater)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHINA</u>	
	(South of the Wall) (thousands)	(North of the Wall) (thousands)
1944.....	832.....	461
1945.....	1,134.....	784

Source: Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo, Japan, April 1960.

Nationalist Chinese forces. The formation and achievements of the CTC will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Leadership in the military at the general officer level, was also a major cause of the problems. Chinese generals were relatively inept and focused primarily on political factors not operational or tactical ones. Military officers came from one of four sources: Paoting Military Academy, Whampoa Academy, Shikan Gakko (Japan's Military Academy), or from the ranks. By 1944, only 10% of China's generals had received any formal education and most of that was prior to or during World War I.¹⁵ This is important in that it fixes the focus of the Chinese Army's leadership to a war fought more than twenty years earlier.

The final facet of Wedemeyer's mission was clearly tied to the Nationalist/Communist controversy in China. The Americans realized that to recognize anyone other than Chiang as the titular leader of all China was politically impossible. But to aid him in subduing the Communists in any manner was likewise infeasible. In areas of China where the Communists were actually engaged in operations against the Japanese, Wedemeyer suggested the diversion of supplies and ammunition to assist them. Chiang invariably vetoed these suggestions. He undoubtedly feared that he would see those same supplies used later to subvert his own attempts to unify China.

The political situation that faced Wedemeyer was the same as it had been for Stilwell. However, Wedemeyer brought a different approach to the political aspects of the job. Stilwell saw his as a purely military role and steadfastly refused to become entangled in Chinese politics. As time passed he characterized the Nationalist Chinese leaders as opportunists. He felt the Nationalist generals were more concerned with padding their own holdings throughout China than with fighting the Japanese. He saw them as cowardly and frequently was chagrined over their unwillingness to fight.¹⁶

Wedemeyer's approach was to treat the Chinese as he had anyone else he had come in contact with throughout his life - as equals. Then if they proved unworthy of his trust and confidence he could adjust. His philosophy was embodied in the expression, "If you trust a man and give him your best, he'll almost never let you down."¹⁷

This then was the situation Wedemeyer faced as he arrived in Kunming in late October 1944. His basic mission was the same as that of Stilwell and there would be no shortage of guidance. It came from a wide variety of sources. Wedemeyer's past experience with officials at the highest levels of government prepared him somewhat for the barrage of advice and directives he received from the President, the State Department and of course the Army Chief of Staff as well. Additionally, he had the U.S.

Ambassador to China, MG Patrick J. Hurley and his staff on hand to help. How could Wedemeyer go wrong?

Wedemeyer's approach to these problems was forthright and candid. He stated his resolve to help the Chinese and stated that anyone in his command (Table 4) with a defeatist attitude could ask for a transfer.^{1a} Wedemeyer set about analyzing the Chinese armed forces with an eye toward streamlining them and increasing their efficiency. All of this was done without losing sight of the political side of things. He was well aware of the ramifications of his job and sought to accomplish his mission with a minimum of ill will for all parties concerned.

TABLE 4
U.S Troop Strengths in China
(November 1944 - August 1945)

<u>MONTH/YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL (thousands)</u>
November 1944.....	30
January 1945.....	32.9
March 1945.....	37.9
May 1945.....	51.6
July 1945.....	57.2
14 August 1945.....	60.3

Source: Tabulation of G-1, China Theater, Reports in Folder, "Supply, China Theater, 1945." Office of the Chief of Military History.

ENDNOTES

Chapter One INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

¹"Foreign News", Time, (04 June 1945): 40.

²War Department, General Officer Management Office, "Biographical Data Sheet - Albert Coady Wedemeyer (O-12484)", (Washington, DC, 01 June 1946), 2.

³Keith E. Eiler, "The Man Who Planned Victory" American Heritage 34 (October-November 1983):38.

⁴Eiler, 38.

⁵War Department Biography, 2.

⁶War Department Biography, 2.

⁷Charles F. Romanus & Riley Sunderland, Time Runs Out on CBI (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1959), 30.

⁸Romanus & Sunderland, 230.

⁹Leonard Mosley, Marshall: A Hero for Our Time (New York: Hearst Books, 1982), 362.

¹⁰Thomas M. Johnson & Greta Palmer, "Wedemeyer's Outstretched Hand," The Reader's Digest 49 (October 1946): 127.

¹¹"U.S. at War," Newsweek (06 November 1944): 33.

¹²Joseph Alsop, "The Foredoomed Mission of General Marshall," The Saturday Evening Post 222 (21 January 1950): 111.

¹³Romanus & Sunderland, 47.

¹⁴Harry S. Truman, Year of Decision (Memoirs by Harry S. Truman) (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1955), 62. Note that there are two versions of the mission given to Wedemeyer as he assumed command of the China Theater. The one cited here reflects the strategic goal of the unification of the Nationalist and Communist factions. The other version listed in the official Army Green Book History as written by Romanus and Sunderland, reflects the mission as it appeared after it was filtered through the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The two are similar except as noted. The Truman version is used here because it gives the best view of the total scope of Wedemeyer's mission.

¹⁵Hsi-Sheng Ch'I, Nationalist China at War (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1982), 66.

¹⁶Romanus & Sunderland, 15.

¹⁷Thomas M. Johnson & Greta Palmer, "Wedemeyer's Outstretched Hand," 49 The Reader's Digest (October 1946): 128.

¹⁸Romanus & Sunderland, 10.

CHAPTER 2

LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS IN THE CHINA THEATER

Politics in China have baffled Americans for centuries. Wedemeyer undoubtedly felt like the man tasked to "unscramble the omelet" when sent to unify China. There was for one thing, no unity on the Nationalist side. The Nationalist President, Chiang Kai-shek, led a powerful group of supporters, but within the Nationalist camp there were regional warlords with competing interests. There were also liberal political groups opposed to Chiang's autocratic rule. Finally, Wang Ching-wei, a former Nationalist leader, had become the head of the puppet government established by the Japanese in Nanking and was working hard to discredit Chiang's government.

The major opposition group to Chiang's Nationalists was the Communist party led by Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai and Chu Te. By December 1944 the Communists controlled an area with more than 90,000,000 inhabitants. They were a significant political force and possessed a large military.

Both they and the Nationalists had their own political goal, control of China. This meant that their agendas would often be different from that of the Allies in the China Theater.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek held two people as his closest advisors. One was his wife Madame Chiang, the other his brother-in-law Dr. T.V. Soong. Both were educated in the United States and spoke excellent English. Though the Generalissimo had a rudimentary grasp of English, he generally relied on them for translation. Madame Chiang had the ability to charm and disarm the coldest of hearts and she used her talent to China and Chiang's advantage. She was very devoted to her husband and maintained a keen personal interest in Chinese politics.

Dr. Soong was a powerful influence in Chinese politics in his own right, and being the Generalissimo's brother-in-law didn't hurt his efforts to secure high office. Educated at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), Soong was Chiang's primary emissary to foreign heads of state. He had several private conversations with President Truman during the war and was an exceptionally competent writer as well.⁴ His official position at the time of Wedemeyer's arrival, was President of the Executive Yuan (Supreme Cabinet).

The Chinese Communist Party grew rapidly during World War II. The literacy rate in rural China at the time was less than 10%.^o The Communists appealed to the masses through promises of food, clothing, shelter for their families and improved education as well. They also gained mass support through their effective organization of opposition to Japanese attempts to extend their control into the Chinese countryside.

The Nationalist Party on the other hand was corrupt in many ways and people had only to look at their local officials for proof. If the national levy was for a 20% tax on property for example, the local warlord often would gather 30%, keeping the extra portion for himself. People who were unable to pay were beaten or often just disappeared. The Communists were capable of the same ruthlessness, but in trying to win over the hearts and minds of the populace, they were often assisted in their efforts by the Nationalists' practices.

Mao's principal deputy was Chou En-lai. Like Dr. Soong, he was relatively well educated and spoke English. Both he and Mao were dismissed as "simple agrarians"^o by Ambassador Hurley in his initial assessment of them. He would be proven wrong. He obviously misunderstood them.

The Communist aims were to consolidate their gains in the areas they held and position themselves to take over Japanese held areas once World War II ended. They saw WWII

not as an end in itself, but merely as a vehicle to achieve their eventual goal of total domination of China. As Mao put it, "Chinese revolution is an integral part of world revolution against imperialism, feudalism and capitalism."⁷

Chiang Kai-shek acknowledged the existence of the Communists, but steadfastly refused to seriously negotiate with them. He often paid lip service to joining them in coordinated attacks against the Japanese, but in fact was often just as likely to engage Communist forces in skirmishes as he was the Japanese.

As big a problem was Chiang's tendency to distribute American Lend-Lease supplies amongst his own forces in a politically motivated manner. Once, while operations in eastern China were increasing in intensity, Chiang actually reduced the amount of support sent to forces there because he doubted the personal loyalty of the Nationalist general in that area.⁸

At the time of Wedemeyer's assumption of command, the Japanese held the areas in China indicated on the map at Table 5. Their immediate plans called for continued aggressive operations in the East to consolidate their gains. Further they planned to move toward the West and destroy the logistical link in Kunming.

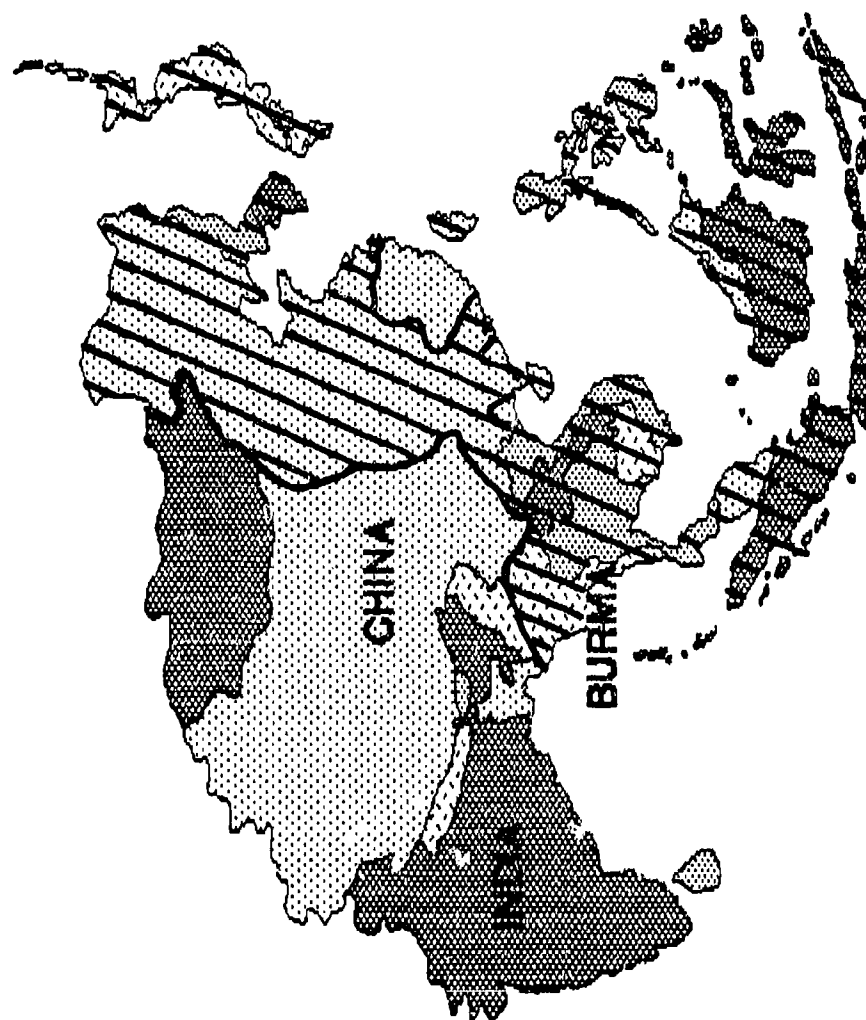
Earlier in the war, China was supplied via the Burma Road. This 680-mile long route twisted through the jungles

and mountains from Lashio, Burma to Kunming and was the sole lifeline to the Allies in China. This was a weak link at best due to the inability of the Chinese to adequately secure it against Japanese interdiction. Once Japanese operations in Burma intensified, that end of the road was eventually cut. Then the burden fell to the American Army Air Corps to supply the forces in China by flying over the "Hump".

Kunming, with its improved logistics facilities and airfields, was the eastern hub of the major air routes into free China (Table 6). This accounted for the intense Japanese interest in Kunming. Chiang, however located the Nationalist governmental capital in Chungking, some 450 miles to the north. Because of this separation of the logistical and political bases in China, a great deal of effort was exerted in prioritizing the defensive effort of the Allies. Chiang saw the enormous political impact of the fall of Chungking while Wedemeyer had to constantly remind him that the loss of Kunming would be fatal to the overall effort to hold China.⁹

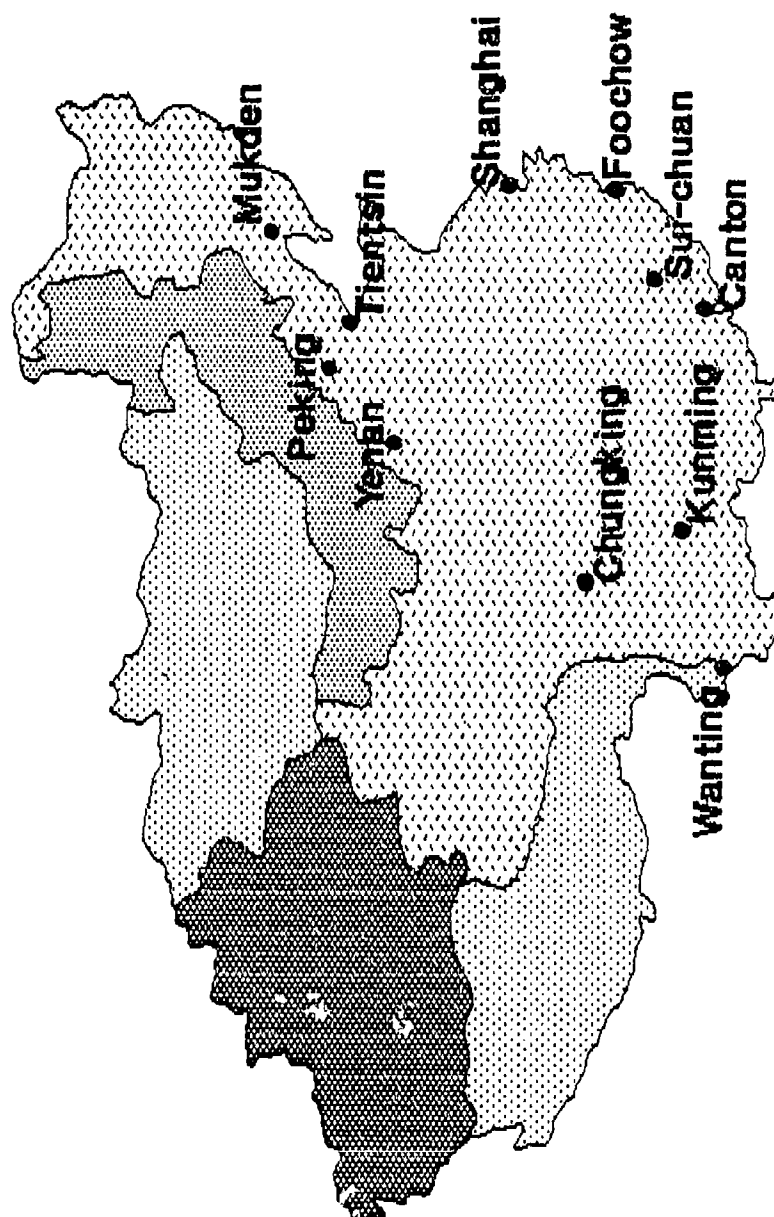
Wedemeyer often lamented that he would work for hours to detail an agreement on strategy or tactics only to find that Chiang changed their agreement afterwards. Chiang's bevy of political advisors would change his mind using political reasoning that often caused great frustration for Wedemeyer and the American planners.¹⁰

TABLE 5
Situation in China & Southeast Asia
(November 1944)



/// Japanese Held Areas

TABLE 6
Key Chinese Cities



Stilwell had seen these same attitudes during his tenure and the repeated failure of his best efforts to combine Nationalist and Communist actions against the Japanese, made him bitter to the point of ineffectiveness. Wedemeyer approached the situation with the idea of trying to achieve some minor success in the area of establishing a coalition, and then building on it. At least it would build a backfire to Japan's pressure on Chiang for a separate armistice. What he eventually achieved in this area was to secure overall agreement that a coalition command should be formed. On that major point both sides agreed.

On the fine points of implementing that agreement, nothing was accomplished. When Wedemeyer or Hurley met with the Nationalist or Communist leaders, they extended customary Chinese courtesy and attention. When it came to signing up for a specific set of implementation guidelines, there always seemed to be conditions imposed by one side that made the overall agreement unacceptable to the other.

Once, Hurley traveled back and forth to the Nationalist and Communist camps with a proposed agreement for a cease fire. After getting some amendments from the Communists that changed the basic wording of the document he traveled back to the Nationalists to get their approval of the change. They agreed in part, but wanted to clarify the rights of the Chinese citizens affected in the cease

fire. This changed the intent once more and so another trip was made to see the Communists. Finally, out of frustration, Hurley attempted to amend the agreement by adding the bill of rights from the United States Constitution!¹¹

Given the command structure within China and his position as Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek, Wedemeyer was able to go only so far in recommending concessions to the Communists before his loyalty to the Nationalists would be questioned. As a result, no American arms, munitions or supplies reached the Communists. They recognized the support given the Nationalists and became increasingly anti-American. After World War II they would use these events to identify Wedemeyer as a lackey for Chiang.¹² Without any official entry into the Communist camp, Wedemeyer was powerless to gain any credibility with them. This hampered Wedemeyer's attempts to accomplish the unification facet of his mission.

The negative Communist view of Wedemeyer did not preclude the General from struggling toward the unification goal. However, the resistance he encountered from Chiang and from certain sources within the American Government in Washington made the task nearly impossible. Wedemeyer, for his own part, had been a long-time opponent of Communism and there was no reason to believe that he would worry over the lack of desire on the part of either side to enter into

a coalition with the other. Therefore the task of trying to achieve this goal fell to Ambassador Hurley.

Hurley, as mentioned previously, employed a type of shuttle diplomacy between the Communist capital in Yen-an and the Nationalist capital in Chungking. Meanwhile, other Allied organizations were attempting to resolve the great divisions that existed in China at the time. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was in contact with Chou En-lai trying to solidify the effort against the Japanese. The OSS proposed training and equipping a force of 25,000 men (Communist Chinese), to be used commando style against the Japanese. The training never took place. While all the various factions of the Allied Powers had a common goal, i.e. defeat of the Japanese in China, their uncoordinated efforts were a detriment to the overall Chinese command.

Wedemeyer sought operational control over the various agencies operating in China and when it was granted, issued a policy directive that mandated prior coordination with his office before further negotiations took place. This bickering amongst the Americans must have amused the Generalissimo because it played into his hands. By increasing the role the Americans played in defeating the Japanese in China, he could reduce the casualties his own forces suffered. This may have been a facet of Chiang's strategy that was initially unrecognized, first by Stilwell and then Wedemeyer.

Chiang's strategy was to operate as he had prior to the war, that is, as the head of a Nationalist government comprised of warlords spread geographically throughout China. This was the political aspect that he took into account when making various decisions that affected the conduct of the war. An example of how this entered into his thinking involves the conduct of the battle for the airfield at Sui-chuan in early 1945.

The Sui-chuan area was controlled by General Hsueh Yueh an independent leader whom Chiang regarded with jealousy and contempt.¹³ The airfield was a satellite base of operations for the 14th U.S. Air Force and as such had some stores of vital supplies. Despite repeated recommendations on the part of the American advisors to assist Hsueh, Chiang refused to give him any arms or ammunition. A courageous battle ensued and Hsueh's army was defeated. They had paid the price for their leader's being seen as a potential threat by the Generalissimo.

Chiang's attitude toward the Allies in World War II had been shaped by events that took place immediately after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. On the day of the attack he offered to place China in a grand coalition with the United States, Britain, the Commonwealth Nations, the Netherlands and Russia to defeat the Japanese in the Pacific.¹⁴ For Britain the center stage was naturally Europe and primary in their minds was the defeat of Hitler.

The United States had been following the Sino-Japanese war since the late 1930's and had not been too impressed with the military talent China brought to the battlefield. As a result, Chiang's proposal of a grand coalition was never adopted.

Though Chiang was invited and, in fact, attended the Cairo conference, he was never thought of as a co-equal by Churchill, Roosevelt or Stalin. This is borne out by their actions concerning China at Yalta. The concessions made to the Russians at Yalta, underlined the fact that China was never thought of as a high priority theater during the conduct of World War II.

This "snub", as Chiang saw it, was not totally unexpected. While the West had had some intellectual interest in China since 1583 when the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci settled in Kwangtung,¹² it had primarily been oriented on the "conversion" of China to the ways of the West. The Chinese had steadfastly refused to alter their culture and customs and align them with those of the West, so Chiang merely carried on in like manner. Though the Allies refused to make China a priority, they nonetheless pumped in millions of dollars of aid. Chiang, as we have seen, used this aid judiciously to reward the armies of those coalition Nationalist leaders whom he felt best supported him. When Wedemeyer later attempted to pare down the Chinese Army from 300+ to 100 divisions, Chiang

tentatively agreed. But it is not clear whether Chiang did so because fewer divisions made sense, or because he feared a reduction in American aid if he refused.

Surely 100 divisions with the concentrated training and supplies that the Americans were offering would be most formidable. Chiang's dilemma was...which 100 divisions would he focus on? For several years he had been riding herd over factional warlords who controlled the Army in their areas. When they were threatened they would fight to protect their vital interests. What would their reaction be if Chiang told them they must forfeit a part of their army?

This political factor was perhaps overlooked or at least underappreciated by Wedemeyer. As such it became a source of great frustration for him. When the Chinese divisions lent to the British for their operations in Burma fought well, Wedemeyer took this as a validation of the American approach to organization and supply. For Chiang, however, it merely showed what could be done for any of his divisions with the proper amount of American aid. Therefore the performance of the Chinese divisions in Burma was at best, a mixed blessing for Chiang. For while they fought well in Burma, he lost valuable soldiers for his eventual fight to consolidate his holdings in China.

The ever-present political aspect of Chiang's approach to tactics was usually carefully hidden. However

on one occasion he almost revealed himself. The incident followed a most mysterious cessation of a Japanese offensive. The battle for Foochow¹⁶ was going well for the Japanese but just as they approached what would have seemed to be their operational objective, they stopped. When confronted by this curious chain of events, Wedemeyer asked Chiang if he had some sort of prior agreement with the Japanese in that area. Chiang's reaction was absolutely noncommittal. He neither denied nor admitted any complicity with the Japanese. "His only response was a dry cackle."¹⁷

This incident hints at another important part of the Japanese effort in 1944; the attempt to coerce Chiang into signing a separate armistice. From the Chinese side, this would have allowed Chiang to concentrate on fighting the Communists in exchange for relinquishing the eastern seaboard to the Japanese. From the Japanese angle it would have given them the majority of one million more men to utilize elsewhere in the Pacific while maintaining a small constabulary force in China. It is difficult to assess just how seriously Chiang took these offers, but they were extended nonetheless.

Perhaps the best summation of Chiang's approach to the war against the Japanese would be to "let the barbarians fight the barbarians."¹⁸ This revered Chinese saying refers to the employment of the Americans against

the Japanese. Chiang could then spend his time posturing his forces and establishing or reinforcing political ties to deal with the expected postwar conflict with the Communists. While he was able to play off one barbarian against another and rid himself of the Japanese, he would squander as few of his resources as necessary in the process.

ENDNOTES

Chapter Two LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS IN THE CHINESE THEATER

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³Lu Zhengrong, "Mao's Plan to Support U.S. Soldiers Disclosed" Beijing Review (January 14-20, 1991): 38.

⁴Memo, President Truman to Files of Visit of Dr. T.V. Soong, 19 April 1945, President's Secretary's File, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO.

⁵Harry S. Truman, Year of Decision (Memoirs by Harry S. Truman) (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955), 63.

⁶Keith E. Eiler, "The Man Who Planned Victory" American Heritage 34 (October-November 1983): 45.

⁷Corey Ford, Donovan of OSS (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1970), 274.

⁸Charles F. Romanus & Riley Sunderland, Time Runs Out on CBI (Washington: Center of Military History, 1959), 8.

⁹Romanus & Sunderland, 165.

¹⁰Joseph Alsop, "The Foredoomed Mission of General Marshall," The Saturday Evening Post 222 (21 January 1950): 112.

¹¹John F. Melby, interview by Robert Accinelli, 7-14-21- November 1986, Oral History Collection, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO.

¹²"Foreign News," Newsweek (01 September 1947), .

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¹⁴Jonathan D. Spence, To Change China: Western Advisers in China, 1620-1960 (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1969), .

¹⁵Jacques Gernet, A History of Chinese Civilization (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 721.

¹⁴Message, Ambassador Patrick Hurley to President Harry Truman, 11 June 1945, President's Secretary's File, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO.

¹⁷Spence, 269.

¹⁸Spence, 234.

CHAPTER 3

SEARCHING FOR A FORMULA FOR CHANGE

From November 1944 through V-J Day in August of 1945, Allied interest in China increased steadily. The presence of the Japanese was the reason. Success in other theaters could be measured in ground taken, enemy killed, and equipment destroyed, but in China it was different. Before those criteria could be applied to China, changes in training, logistics and tactics needed to take place. It is within that context that the successes and frustrations of Wedemeyer and his command will be examined next.

When Wedemeyer arrived in China in November 1944 as the Theater Commander and Chief of Staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the war was not going well there for the Allies. The Japanese had been content for a good while to consolidate their gains in China and had not pressed to add to them, choosing to focus their effort elsewhere. They were undertaking aggressive operations in Burma and were fighting the Americans on several islands in the Pacific.

They had netted all of the seaports in China and most of the industrial areas, so the portions of the country which they did not hold were of comparatively little use to them.

Use of the relatively meager Chinese air forces was one way the battle could be taken to the Japanese. To do so, Chiang enlisted the aid of MG Claire Chennault. Chennault had experienced some personal and professional setbacks in the late 1930's and was ready for a challenge when approached by Chiang Kai-shek in 1939 to come and survey the Chinese Air Forces. Chiang Kai-shek had challenged Chennault to improve the Chinese pilots and he undertook the task with relish. What he found however, was not encouraging!

Chinese pilots had been trained initially by the Italians and their skills were weak. The total number of planes fit to fly was about 20% of those on the ground. Maintenance was abysmal and the planes that did get off the ground were by no means assured of a safe landing. In one episode that vividly portrays the skill level of the Chinese air forces, 11 planes were returning from an attack on Shanghai. The weather was beautiful for flying, but landing was still to cause problems:

The first pilot overshot the runway and cracked up in a rice paddy. The next ground-looped and burst into flame. The third landed safely, but the fourth smashed into the fire truck speeding toward the burning plane. Five out of the eleven planes were wrecked landing and four pilots killed.

When the war broke out, Chennault was recalled to active duty in the U.S. Army Air Corps and allowed to stay in China and command.² In 1942-43, the American air forces had seen some success through the use of some novel fighter tactics against the Japanese pilots. Various maneuvers worked to allow the Allies air parity in certain areas for brief periods of time. By 1944, he had made some progress in turning the tide of the air war. But because of the loss of the overland route of supply from Burma, he was forced to cut back offensive operations which he felt would halt the Japanese advance.

Chennault remained in China, though troubled physically, and he provided some continuity for Wedemeyer as he transitioned in as the U.S. Commander. By this time Chennault had resigned himself to one of the stark realities of the job; namely that he could not win the war from the air. This was due not to change in his personal vision, but due to the paucity of resources he was given. Since the bulk of what airplanes he had were dedicated to flying in supplies to the theater, he had relatively few left to do much more than harass the Japanese.

Because of the severely restricted lines of supply, the number of Americans in theater was likewise restricted. Wedemeyer took command of some 30,000+ Americans on 1 November 1944, a number which did not appreciably increase until after the reopening of the Burma Road.³ Wedemeyer

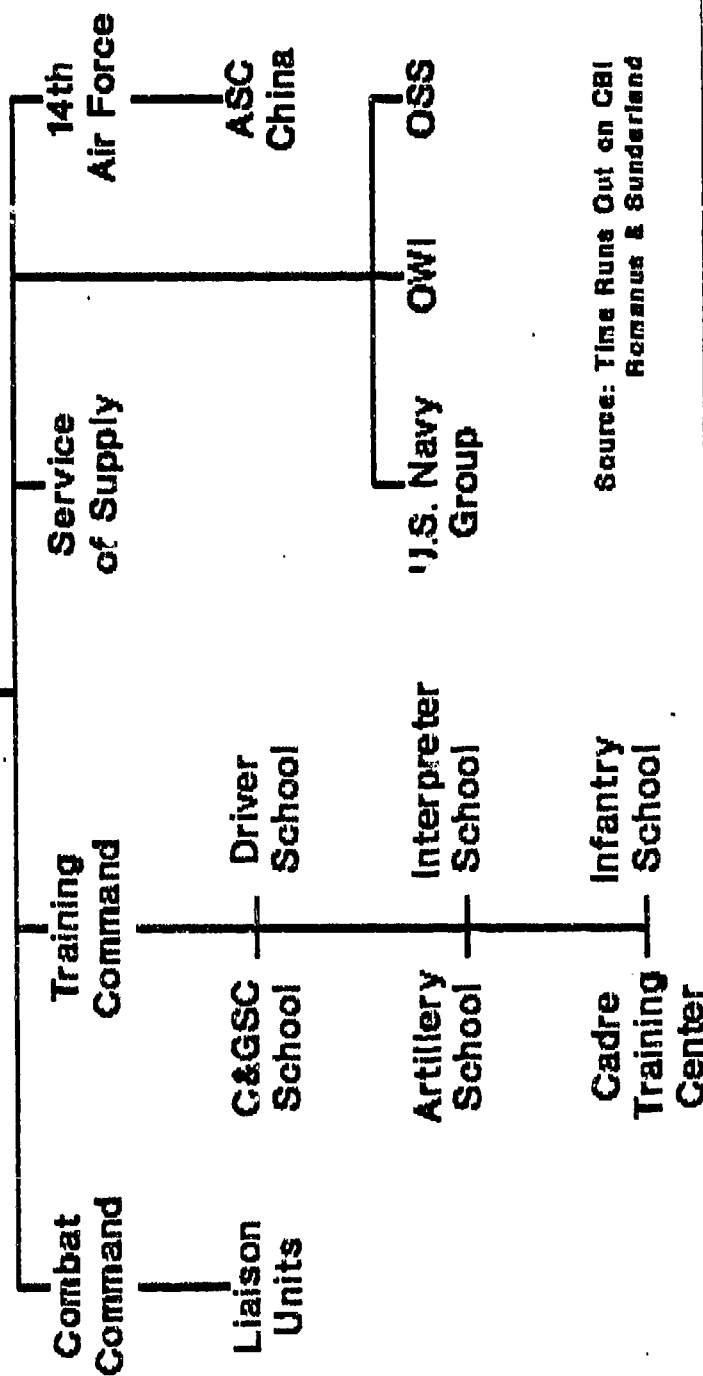
had the appropriate mix of forces to accomplish his mission, if not the total numbers required. The Air Corps troops would continue to fly in the supplies so desperately needed in the theater. The remainder of the forces were involved in the training and ground logistics missions (Table 7).

From the start, Wedemeyer came in with the attitude of being a "team player".* He held weekly news conferences and had the Chinese representatives in the foreground. They answered questions and issued statements as to the conduct and progress in the war in their country. He tried to make it clear that there was a Chinese-American team in place allied against the Japanese. It was not a case of the Americans trying to do it alone. In later years, Wedemeyer drew parallels between this situation and that of being a player on the West Point baseball team. Both "teams" were only successful if the individuals who comprised the team sacrificed any personal glory for the good of the whole team.®

Wedemeyer was personally comfortable serving as Chiang's Chief of Staff and did not harp so much on the things that were not within his power to change. Instead, he focused on those things over which he could exert some control. Specifically he saw a stratified Nationalist Chinese bureaucracy that was marked by poor planning. This created massive problems with storage, transport and

TABLE 7
ORGANIZATION OF U.S. FORCES
(China, January 1945)

MG A.C. Wedemeyer
CG, U.S. Forces, China



Source: Time Runs Out on CBI
 Remains & Sunderland

distribution of supplies. He also saw a draft system that allowed exemptions to people with advanced educations, the very people that could provide the much needed leadership to the Chinese Army.* This reflected the thinking in the old Chinese proverb, "Good iron is not wasted on nails; good men are not used for soldiers!"

Wedemeyer's approach was simple in concept but he would find success nearly impossible to attain. He proposed a system of training centers that would teach the soldiers and more importantly, the leaders, the skills necessary to prosecute the war on their terms. He also started to attack the problems of the soldiers themselves. Most of the soldiers were severely malnourished, not much more than skin and bones. Wedemeyer set up a commission that established minimum nutritional requirements for the soldiers and pumped thousands of dollars into it.⁷ The results were astounding!

Chinese leaders could reasonably expect their troops to not only make road marches but to have the strength to fight once they reached the objective. While this sounds very simple, it was revolutionary in China at the time. Even this system met with its own peculiar heartaches. The vitamin capsules that the soldiers were given were sometimes branded as poison by their leaders and were often thrown away. On the whole, however, more than 185,000 Chinese troops were benefiting from their improved menu by

the end of the war.* For the first time, the Chinese soldiers had enough to eat and grew healthy. Wedemeyer's medical and nutrition experts focused on active health measures and preventive measures dealing with sanitation and food preparation. These measures, diet, nutrition and sanitation, constituted new ground to most of the soldiers who came from very primitive backgrounds.

The methods of attack that Wedemeyer employed were constrained by limitations placed on him by his superiors in the region and back in Washington. Restricted funds and restricted numbers of American personnel available, limited the number of Chinese soldiers that could be trained and fed.

There were three major Allied players who interacted with Wedemeyer during this time. Two of them, Lord Louis Mountbatten and the American Ambassador to China Patrick J. Hurley were in the same theater of operations. The third was the Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall in Washington. Mountbatten was indirectly in control of Wedemeyer's fate due to actions undertaken by forces commanded by General William Slim in the Burma area of operations. Until the Japanese were beaten back and the ground lines of supply were re-established there, Wedemeyer's options were restricted in China. Mountbatten also provided the necessary close coordination between the two commands that was so vital given the scarcity of

resources. Mountbatten was a much maligned commander who it was said got to where he was by virtue of his bloodline. While the opportunity was undoubtedly enhanced by such, his performance of duty once he got the job is what kept him there.

Wedemeyer's relationship with General Marshall was likewise close. Duty with the War Plans Division of the War Department from 1941-43, solidified Wedemeyer's talent and professionalism in the eyes of the Chief of Staff. By late 1944, Marshall had had Wedemeyer promoted to Major General and he nominated him to the President as the replacement for Stilwell in China.

The final major player on the American side in China during this period was Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley. It was Hurley who had the onerous task of attempting to sell a Nationalist-Communist coalition to the Chinese. Ultimately he would be no more successful in gaining the coalition than his predecessors had been.

Meanwhile the Nationalists and Communists were content to snipe at each other and posture for the eventual end of the war against Japan so they could get down to the business of their own civil war. Ultimate control of China is all either party wanted. Only their approaches were different.

The interaction of all of these personalities made the China Theater "a most interesting place to command".

as Wedemeyer was to find out. While Chiang was viewed in Western terms as the head of state of China, he was, in fact, merely riding herd over a coalition of warlords. As a result, all of the advice given had to be filtered politically before it could be implemented in the field.

The tactical ramifications of this were astounding. While his men were fighting 1,600 miles away in Burma, Chiang was making their tactical decisions and changing plans issued by Allied commanders on the spot. This led to the refusal of some Chinese commanders to follow through with pre-planned operations. That the Chinese soldiers lost face on the battlefield was of little concern to Chiang. He wanted to insure that friends and soldiers of his friends did not bear the burden of the war.

Wedemeyer developed a novel approach to this problem that involved training and a liaison system. He established the Chinese Training Command and founded a series of training centers throughout the country to train the entire Nationalist Army. Some would handle recruits, while others dealt with junior level leadership all the way up to a Command and Staff College.

The first of these to open was the Chinese Artillery School. The school was initially commanded by Colonel Garrison B. Coverdale and opened in February 1945.¹⁰ It was staffed entirely by American officers and non-commissioned officers. Wedemeyer planned for this to

eventually change as a trained cadre of Chinese was made available.

The next phase was to install liaison officers and NCOs at all levels of command. From the battalion upwards, the Americans would be involved in the planning and execution process along with the Chinese. If a Chinese leader failed to execute an order or disagreed with it for whatever reason, it was referred to the next higher level of command for resolution. The entire process would eventually lead to Wedemeyer and the Generalissimo if pursued that far. This system improved the viability of the Chinese troop units and tactical success was forthcoming.

Wedemeyer then attacked another problem he shared with Stilwell, that of too many Chinese divisions. As previously mentioned, the Nationalist Chinese had more than 300 divisions at the start of 1945, far more than the economy could support. Since Chiang repeatedly stalled on the issue of reducing the number of troops, Wedemeyer took one of the few venues open to him at that point. He devised what was called the Alpha Plan.¹¹

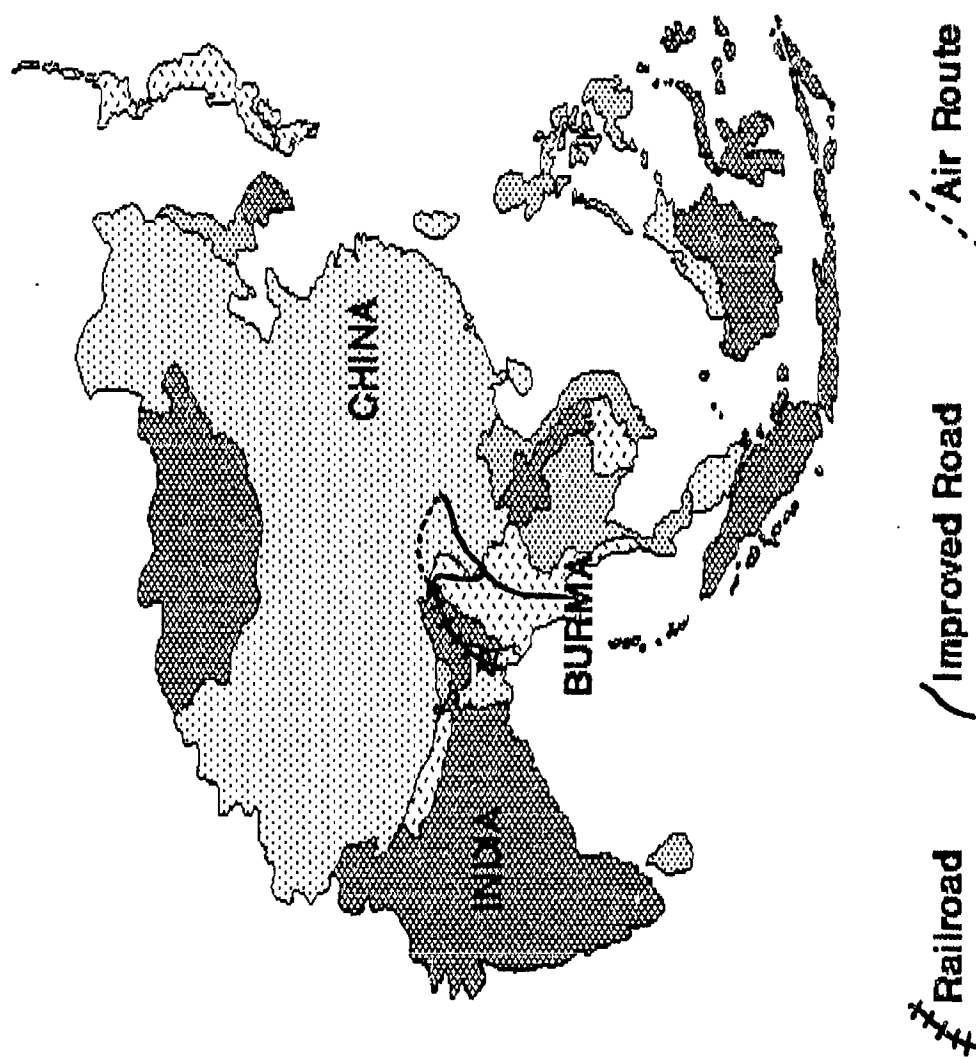
The Alpha Plan designated 100 Chinese divisions to be the ones primarily supported by the Americans. Since he would not relinquish the control of Lend-Lease supplies to the Chinese, Wedemeyer had the necessary leverage to selectively strengthen the portion of the Chinese Army he would use as the basis for his operations. He established

a Table of Organization for the "standard" Chinese division and sought to mold the Alpha Divisions in that manner.

It was necessary to get the Alpha Plan off to a good start if it was to be successful. To do so, Wedemeyer sought the return to China of the divisions Chiang had sent to Burma. These divisions had enjoyed some success in the battlefield and had been trained and fed and clothed by the Allies while in Burma. As a whole, they were superior to most of the divisions left in China. If Wedemeyer could get them back, they would show the other Chinese leaders what could be done under his proposed system of organization. At first Mountbatten denied the request to return them, but when the Burma Road was reopened in early 1945 (Table 8), they were released to the China Theater.¹²

Strategically, Wedemeyer saw the top two priorities as first saving Kunming and secondly saving Chungking. While Chiang bridled at this, Wedemeyer stuck to his guns and all subsequent plans proceeded on this assumption. It is not clear whether Chiang ever accepted these ordered priorities and as events were to play out, it was a moot point. Nevertheless they served as the base on which all planning was founded. Wedemeyer had planned to fortify the Kunming area to insure the viability of the theater's one source of supply. Chiang did not agree to this portion of the plan and dragged his feet on the actual reassignment of

TABLE 8
CBI Lines of Communication
 (July 1945)



specific units. A frustrated Wedemeyer commented that "the Chinese have no concept of organization, logistics, or modern warfare."¹³ Though not specifically mentioned by name, it is clear that Wedemeyer's comment was aimed at Chiang.

While the Chinese Army was crying for competent leadership, Chiang continued to deny the lifting of the exemption to the best educated portion of the population. Wedemeyer was able to get Chiang to concede to the inclusion of these students in the Army only through compromise. The compromise allowed for the students to stay together in three student divisions for training. Once their training was completed, they were to be divided up amongst all Alpha Divisions. This would allow for all of the selected divisions to share in this wealth of new promise. Reports from the training centers were encouraging. The educated recruits were being trained at a faster rate than the others. This coupled with the minimal tactical success the Chinese were achieving, gave hope for the future.

By early 1945, the Japanese setbacks in the Pacific Theater led to a cutback in their operations in China. From a peak level of more than 1.5 million troops in China, the Japanese were reducing their forces to bolster their defenses of the homeland, which was now in range of the American bombers. Despite the successes the Chinese were

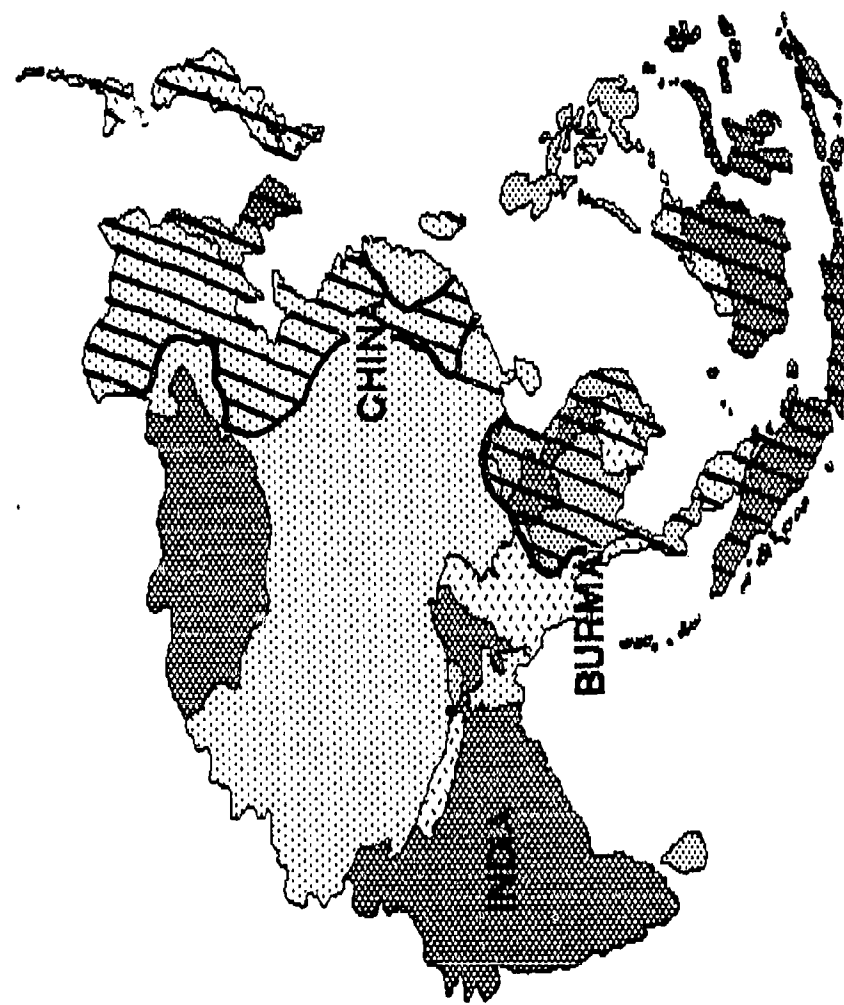
achieving, there was still not a move toward wholesale offensive action on the part of the Chinese. This was inevitably tied to the fact that the Nationalists were looking beyond World War II to their coming conflict against the Communists.

The attention of Chiang was now focused on a comment made by President Roosevelt at the Cairo conference in 1943. Chiang claimed that Roosevelt had promised to fully equip 90 Chinese divisions and prepare them for combat. While the promise had been extended by the President, it was done so, in the words of the President's Advisor Harry Hopkins, "in the context of the war with Japan, not against the Communist Chinese!"¹⁴ As the eventual victory over Japan came into clearer focus, Wedemeyer was wary of committing to such a massive undertaking. While great strides were being made with the Nationalist Army, their tactical results did not justify commitment to this further expenditure (Table 9).

After Roosevelt's death on 12 April 1945, Chiang kept pressuring Truman to outfit the 90 divisions promised by Roosevelt. As noted earlier, Hopkins was able to verify the parameters of the original promise. Clearly Chiang would have liked to have used those 90 divisions against the Communists, but Truman would not be a party to it.

Wedemeyer proceeded with the training and equipping of the Alpha Divisions. Once the security of the Kunming,

TABLE 9
Situation in China & Southeast Asia
(August 1945)



/// Japanese Held Areas

Chungking defensive lines was assured, he developed the Beta Plan. It had four major parts:

1. Make efficient use of the increased supplies.
2. Improve the local military situation.
3. Improve morale/efficiency of the Chinese Army.
4. Open a seaport/move Japanese out of mainland

Asia.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the Beta Plan on 20 April 1945.¹⁵

With the Allied situation worldwide improving dramatically during the first several months of 1945, Wedemeyer found himself with an equally dramatic improvement in his supply status. An early lesson learned in China was that to maximize the use of supplies, the Americans had to retain control over them until final issue to the user. A logistical organization already in place, the Service of Supply, was broadened to insure that this control was exercised. On numerous occasions, the Chinese leaders would promise a certain disposition of supplies only to have that change upon issue. An example of this was the issue of multivitamins to the troops mentioned earlier in this paper. Because of the poor diet of most Chinese citizens at the time, it was no wonder the soldiers suffered from the same malnutrition.

An American medical contingent came in and set down specific dietetic requirements for the soldiers in the

Alpha Divisions. This included specific amounts of meat, vegetables, rice, etc.^{1*} The Chinese had seen the dramatic effects this dietary approach had had on the Chinese Divisions that had been loaned to the Burma Command and had been similarly supported.

Because of the problem of procurement and storage of foodstuffs, a great deal of them were retained in six area warehouses for distribution to the units as needed. To accomplish this the Americans had to retain control over not only the food but also the transportation assets to move them. Though enormously difficult, it was accomplished through solid planning and organization, and the troops got healthier. Performance capability increased dramatically.

Some of the most difficult discussions of this time revolved around the supply of Communist units. Wedemeyer had grown wary of planning for the tactical employment of the Nationalist units...some simply would not fight! He had been maintaining some communication through Ambassador Hurley and the OSS with the Communists. Mao had pledged to employ his troops against the Japanese but wanted assurances that they would get a share of the Lend-Lease cornucopia that was now coming down the Burma Road. Though he had an eye on posturing his forces for the immediate post-war fighting against the Nationalists, Mao knew that his forces were more ill-equipped than the Nationalists.

The two issues came to a head as the plans for the defense of Kunming were formulated. The American planners called for a specified number of divisions to hold Kunming and the Nationalists did not seem too anxious to order that size force into the area. Chiang was typically non-committal until Wedemeyer stated that he could resolve the situation by asking the Communists to help out. Chiang stated emphatically, "I will tell you when the Communists can play a role and where it is to be!"¹⁷ He was clearly not going to be a party to helping the Communists better position themselves for the post-war fight.

The morale of the Chinese soldier in the Alpha Divisions was improving because by and large he had never been better fed, better clothed or better trained. The Chinese Training Command was in full swing, with seven training centers and schools in operation. The focus was not to attempt the training of the highest level of leader, but rather focus on the junior level leaders from the field grade equivalent ranks downward. From the Chinese Command and Staff College to the schools of Infantry and Artillery through to the troop training facilities, Chinese were being taught to be aggressive and forceful against their foe and to think offensively.

An offensive action was planned which resulted in the taking of the city of Wanting, described as "the first offensive campaign China had waged in centuries."¹⁸

Clearly the Chinese would and could fight and give a good account of themselves if given the same support often taken for granted by Americans. The plan to feed, clothe and train the Alpha Divisions was bearing fruit, and one of the goals of the Beta Plan was coming into fruition. The morale and efficiency of the Chinese Army was on the upswing.

Financially, the Nationalist Government was drowning in its own red ink. Inflation was running rampant (Table 10). Repeated efforts to downsize the Army were rebuffed by Chiang. The Chinese War Production Board, an Allied assessments organization of the economic capabilities of the nation, recommended likewise a dramatic reduction to "no more than 100 divisions." But Chiang was adamant, he would not cut the size of the Nationalist force. Politically his hands were tied. Besides, the amount of Lend-Lease funding he was getting from the Americans was steadily increasing. American expenditures for military and economic aid was increasing even when adjusted for inflation.^{1*}

However, Wedemeyer under orders from Washington, was tighter than ever with these funds. If the Chinese were not going to expend them in action against the Japanese, then they were not to get either the money or the materiel. While this was not the way Chiang would have liked it, he recognized he was powerless to change it.

TABLE 10
Inflation in China
(1944 1945,)
(Shown in range of Chinese\$ to one U.S.\$)

<u>MONTH/YEAR</u>	<u>RATIO</u>
January 1944.....	86-255
July 1944.....	188-680
January 1945.....	470-2,250
July 1945.....	650-3,250

Source: United States Department of State White Paper on China, 1949, 437.

The final facet of the Beta Plan then focused on the operational goals in the theater. Wedemeyer and his staff wanted to focus on the opening of the Eastern seaboard and a port on the Pacific. This was to play a vital role in the post-war China problem of repatriation of the Japanese. But no real consensus was reached as the Summer of 1945 moved toward mid-July.

Wedemeyer took stock of his progress towards accomplishing his mission in China. He had succeeded in keeping the Nationalist Chinese in the war against the Japanese and had insured that Americans kept out of civil strife in China. But he was frustrated at every turn in his efforts to effect a coalition agreement between the Nationalists and the Communists. So the Chinese effort against the Japanese was never as strong as it could have been. He felt he had exhausted all military means available to him and stated in a cable to Marshall...

"If the Big 3 (United States, Britain and Russia) put teeth into their efforts to unify the Nationalists and the Communists, that is the only chance of it happening. If not, forget it."²⁰

Politically President Truman had already relegated attempts at achieving this coalition a relatively low priority and no further action would be taken on it until after the war with Japan ended.

Chiang continued to meet with Wedemeyer on almost a daily basis as the war moved on and the eventual defeat of

Japan became more certain. But from the Nationalist operational standpoint, their main adversaries in China were no longer the Japanese but the Communists.

Wedemeyer assessed the preparedness of the Chinese for peace and found them lacking. In a cable to Marshall, Wedemeyer stated...

"they are grossly unprepared. They have no plan for rehabilitation, prevention of epidemics, restoration of utilities, establishment of a balanced economy, or the re-disposition of millions of refugees."²¹

Further, Chiang had been told that when the end of the war was declared, the pipeline of Lend-Lease supplies would stop. As a result he was once again encouraged to initiate reforms necessary to govern the country without further help from the United States.

Thoughts in the Nationalist camp turned to the prospect of hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers laying down their arms in communist held sections of the country. If they surrendered to Mao, his soldiers would have primary access to all the Japanese weapons, ammunition and equipment. As July turned to August 1945, Chiang's political advisors assured him that victory over the Japanese was still a long way off. They would have enough time to get Nationalist soldiers into areas held by the Japanese and accept their surrender. Chiang pressed Wedemeyer. He wanted to insure that Japanese soldiers were restricted from surrendering to the Communists. This would

require the movement of large numbers of Nationalist troops into Communist-held areas, all for the nominal purpose of accepting the surrender of the Japanese.

Wedemeyer exposed the request for what it was, a lightly veiled attempt to get the Americans involved in the Nationalist/Communist civil war on Chiang's side. The War Department reiterated its directive to Wedemeyer, Americans will not be involved in civil strife in China. A potentially sensitive situation was approaching the Americans as was the end of their war against Japan. It was fortunate that Wedemeyer's planners were thinking ahead. Little did they know how close to defeat the Japanese were. The first use of the atomic bomb in combat was less than two weeks away. It would change the way planners thought forever.

The cable arrived at Wedemeyer's Headquarters on 14 August 1945, announcing the formal end to hostilities. Within two weeks, all training of the Chinese had stopped and advisors held their ground awaiting direction.²² Victory against Japan had been achieved. While jubilation reigned in most other Allied countries, China was noticeably quiet. Now the Chinese readied themselves for the war that Japan had only delayed.

ENDNOTES

Chapter Three SEARCHING FOR A FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

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CHAPTER 4

FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE

Victory over Japan brought a new set of opportunities to General Wedemeyer. With the war over, President Truman could reshuffle his political priorities. This chapter will examine the impact of those reordered priorities on the mission of Wedemeyer in the China Theater. It will also cover the Presidential mission of General Marshall to China in 1946 and his effect on the course of Wedemeyer's further work there.

The surrender of the Japanese to the Allies in August 1945, was of little consequence to the millions of Chinese citizens scattered throughout the country. Life went on in its seeming endless cycle of poverty and squalor. Most of the Chinese belonged to the lowest tier of the social strata, they were poor and destitute. Most had known little else in their lifetimes so they were relatively no worse off after the war than they had been before.

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concessions were granted to Stalin at the Yalta conference.

They were as follows:

1. The "lease" of Port Arthur as a naval base.
2. The "internationalization" of Dairen with "pre-eminent" rights to Russia in this largest of China's northeastern ports.
3. The "joint operation" of Manchurian railways by China and Russia with the "pre-eminent interests" of Russia safeguarded.³

What is important to note is that while Chiang Kai-shek had attended one of the previous conferences with Roosevelt and Churchill, he was not consulted nor was he present when these concessions were granted to Russia. It fell to Ambassador Hurley to tell Chiang after the fact, in June 1945. Rights very similar to these had been the seeds that had started the Sino-Japanese war in 1937.⁴ Japan was interested in control of the vast coal and iron ore deposits in Manchuria and northern China and when denied access to them by the Nationalist government started a war which allowed them to take the resources they coveted. Then eight years later with Japan on the verge of defeat, the same rights were granted to Russia without consultation with the Chinese!

To put a diplomatic face on this bold play, Stalin proposed a Sino-Russian treaty which was signed on 14 August 1945. In it he agreed to provide military and

material aid to Nationalist China and recognize Chiang as the rightful leader of China. These pledges were promptly ignored and the rape of Manchuria began.⁶ History shows that both the Mongols in the 13th Century and the Manchus in the 17th Century, conquered China by first taking control of Manchuria.⁶ Now the Russians were off to a good start in their attempt to duplicate the feat.

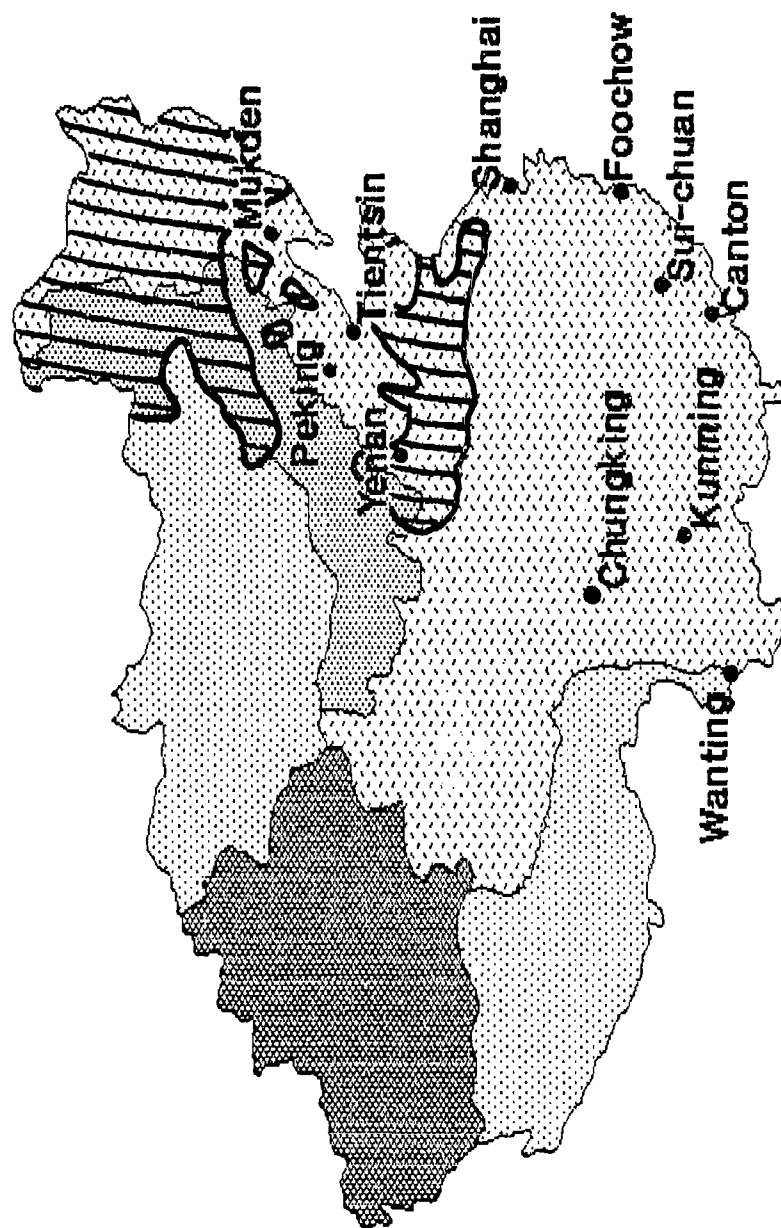
They had entered Manchuria and systematically looted it of more than 800 million dollars worth of industrial equipment. This was not widely known at first. Even after it was, the United States refused to confront Russia about it. During this period friendly relations with Russia took precedence over all other considerations.⁷

Politically the Allies' primary focus on V-J Day was the Japanese forces still in theater and what to do with them. The Nationalists insisted that the Japanese should surrender to them and no one else. Chiang, however, had a severe transportation problem that caused him to rethink the surrender issue. He turned to Wedemeyer and asked for a sizeable number of ground and sea assets to move his troops into areas occupied by the Japanese. By doing so he envisioned that he would be able to preempt a bid by the Chinese Communists to accept the surrender of the Japanese in those areas and gain militarily through acquisition of their arms and ammunition.

What came to pass was actually a mixture of both possible outcomes, complicated by the actions of the Russians in Manchuria. There the Russians refused entry of Nationalist troops and accepted the surrender of Japanese forces in many areas. They then made vast amounts of captured arms, ammunition and equipment available to the Communist Chinese. The result was that the Communists strengthened their grip on the north (Table 11) and the task of rooting them out was made all the more difficult.⁹

Entry of Nationalist troops into the areas controlled by the Japanese was a political necessity for Chiang and he pressed Wedemeyer and the Americans hard for transportation to do the job.¹⁰ The transfer of troops was eventually accomplished in some areas but not with the overwhelming results Chiang had hoped for. He was encouraged to consolidate his holdings in the south and concentrate on the repatriation of the seaboard before venturing in any strength into the Northern Provinces. Once more the advice of Wedemeyer and his staff was ignored. To be confronted with a growing Communist threat in Manchuria and simply ignore it, would have been tantamount to agreeing that the Nationalists were powerless to do anything about it. Therefore, in order to save face, the Nationalists struck out for Northern China.¹¹

TABLE 11
Situation in China
 (Spring 1946)



/// Communist held areas

The results were predictable. The lines of communication with the troops in the North were nearly impossible to maintain. Furthermore, the groundswell of popular support Chiang had hoped for did not materialize. The problem was worsened by his choice of leadership for the area. He once again recognized the fierce loyalty for some of his Southern Chinese friends and attempted to place them in charge in the North. This ignored the many competent local officials that could have been as supportive and infinitely more effective in controlling the local populace. This political and military isolation of the Nationalist troops hastened their eventual defeat at the hands of the Soviet-supported Chinese Communists.

By late November 1945, the intentions of the Russians in Manchuria had become abundantly clear to Wedemeyer. He had the mission from Washington to try to encourage friendly relations between the Nationalist and the Communists and at the same time all signs pointed to the impossibility of the task. President Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked for a report on China that outlined both United States interests and future prospects for the Chinese people. Marshall cautioned him to refrain from making any recommendations for action lest he appear to be attempting to make policy for the State Department.

Wedemeyer had received the directive while on a trip to Washington in early November. During that trip the

President had pledged the "continued support of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Government of China." This was countered effectively by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) who stated that all assistance to China, be it economic, military or otherwise, was to be based on the establishment of a fully representative government.¹¹ It meant in effect that aid to China was dependent on the Nationalists coming to terms with the Communists.

China was caught in a seeming endless cycle of economic problems. The military problem of too many divisions continued to exacerbate the problem of inflation documented earlier. Aid from America was crucial but not forthcoming in the quantity Chiang desired. Money that was sent was skimmed by the corrupt Chinese leaders who were in the majority at this time. Economic problems meant that social concerns could not be addressed with the immediacy they required. As a result the Chinese people became more disenchanted with the Nationalist government.

Wedemeyer insisted that this pattern had to be broken. But how to get Chiang to take the crucial first step, was the question. In late November 1944, Chiang had taken what looked to be a giant step towards accomplishing the reforms required to stabilize the government. He had replaced the Ministers of War, Education and Finance; Ho Ying-chin, Chen Li-fu and H.H. Kung respectively.¹²

But by the Fall of 1945, they resurfaced as ministers elsewhere in the government. While these changes were not decisive, they suggested one of two things. Either that Chiang was acknowledging that he had problems that necessitated action or that he was making cosmetic changes to appease the United States. Opportunities continued to present themselves in 1945, but Chiang deftly deflected them.

Wedemeyer continued to seek definitive guidance from Washington during this time but little was forthcoming. Proclamations by the President of full support came with inevitable caveats by the JCS and the State Department, that restricted the aid required by the Nationalist to maintain their status vis-a-vis the Communists in China.

With the closing of the Chinese Training Command in August 1945, the supply of competently trained tacticians, soldiers and even truck drivers ceased. China, which had severe deficits in all these areas prior to the opening of the Chinese Training Centers, quickly reverted to its pre-CTC status. The CTC was deemed to be pro-Nationalist in their fight against the Communists. So by the strict adherence to the guidelines published by the State Department, Wedemeyer was forced to close it.

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) played a part in immediate post-WWII China. It organized Mercy Teams which were sent in three waves to Japanese-run Prisoner of

War Camps throughout China to repatriate Americans in captivity. First a group of operatives would parachute into the general area of the camp. The team would coordinate entry into the camp to see the prisoners and would notify the Japanese of an imminent drop of supplies for the prisoners. Finally, planes would land at the nearest air strips to evacuate the prisoners to American bases elsewhere in China. Several incidents occurred during the insertion of these teams and, in fact, some teams were denied access to American POWs by local Chinese forces.¹³ Nonetheless, this most important mission was accomplished as an outgrowth of strong ties Wedemeyer had established with the OSS in early 1945.

As the primary intelligence collection agency in China during and immediately after WWII, the OSS should have played a vital part in the decision-making process in the China theater. However as an outgrowth of their involvement in negotiations with the Communists outlined in Chapter Two, they were denied access to North China and Manchuria. This compounded the problem of the untrustworthy Russians in those areas. Without sources of independent verification, the Americans were forced to agree with Russian assessments of conditions and the status of Japanese forces there. The most important of these mythical reports dealt with the largely fictitious Japanese Kwantung Army. Reports of this large and powerful army

dated to pre-Yalta Conference times.¹⁴ These fictitious reports deceived the Americans into believing that the presence of Russia was still needed in the Theater.

By November 1945, Wedemeyer was still un-informed as to specific United States policy for China. In a meeting held on 20 November 1945, (and attended by the Secretaries of the Navy (Forrestal), War (Patterson), and State (Byrnes)), Forrestal noted that:

"Wedemeyer continues to press for clarification of policy. While it is okay to help the Nationalists get the Japs out he can not help them against the Communists. It is impossible to support Chiang at all without supporting him against the Communists! If that is our course, the State Department needs to be making that decision."¹⁵

Byrnes was mum. No decision or clarification by the State Department was forthcoming. It wouldn't be until the day he sent Marshall to China, that President Truman would clarify United States post-war policy towards China.¹⁶

There was a powerful faction within the State Department that still insisted that peaceful co-existence between the Nationalists and Communists was possible, but that the stumbling block was Chiang. Dean Acheson, then a supporting player within the State Department, noted in his diary, "Chiang is a fine fellow, but if he doesn't behave, kick him up the ass!"¹⁷ Most of the major parties in the highest levels of government had clear opinions about the situation in China. What was needed was for the President or the State Department to finalize a policy for China.

Ostensibly to aid him in making just such a decision, President Truman decided to send Marshall to China in December 1945 on a fact-finding trip. Marshall arrived in Shanghai, China on 20 December 1945 and after formal arrival and welcoming ceremonies, went by motorcade to the Cathay Hotel where he was to be quartered. Wedemeyer had met him at the airport and privately told him that his (Marshall's) mission would be almost impossible.

Marshall uncharacteristically snapped at Wedemeyer "I will accomplish it and you will help me!" Somewhat taken aback by the rejoinder Wedemeyer pledged his complete support and later at the hotel was asked to accompany Marshall to his room. There the two met for several hours. About this meeting Marshall biographer Leonard Moseley noted, "They went in as trusted colleagues and they came back deeply suspicious of each other. Things were never the same between them again."¹² Wedemeyer agreed that things were never quite the same between them again, but passed off the problem as owing to Marshall's exhaustion from his superlative efforts as Chief of Staff in securing victory."¹³ This loss of unrestrained faith in each other would take its toll over the course of the next several years as each man moved to higher positions within the government. It is simplistic to state that their disagreement stemmed from a difference of opinion on the Chinese Communists, but that is what in fact brought them

to this point in December 1945. There would be no return to the warm unrestrained friendship both had previously enjoyed.

President Truman, in his formal mission memorandum to Marshall, stated he was to persuade the Chinese to bring about the unification of all China and the cessation of hostilities. No aid from the United States would be forthcoming while China is "torn by civil strife". Truman further stated that the United States wanted to support a strong unified China and saw a conference of representatives of all parties as the quickest way to solve the problem. He encouraged Marshall to gather the various factions and have them agree to a cease fire and then develop agreements that would eventually set the stage for self-determination by the Chinese citizens.

There was a lot of unsolicited advice coming to the President at this time from outside and inside the U.S government. One example is a letter from the Honorable Hugh DeLacy, Congressman from the State of Washington. He had several recommendations for the President and surmised that Wedemeyer was "undermining the President and Marshall and should be removed from China".²⁰ His letter offers no examples of the purported "undermining" actions but judging from the President's response, the specifics were known to both parties. Congressman DeLacy further favored the total withdrawal of Americans from China and there is

reason to believe that pressure to "bring the boys home" was the source of his letter to the President in the first place. Truman however strongly supported Wedemeyer in his response to the Congressman.

"It does not help either the morale of the American troops who have to stay on the job or the situation at home," Truman continued, "for people to make charges which are not founded in fact."²¹

Still more advice flowed into the State Department as well. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), wrote to BG Harry Hawkins Vaughn who was a Military Liaison to the State Department. He told Vaughn of the founding of the Committee for Democratic Policy toward China who were adamantly against the current policy of support of Chiang Kai-shek. The committee claimed "we (the United States) are supporting a government in China that has resisted democratic reform in China rather than support it."²² The letter was forwarded to President Truman who filed it but there is little evidence that these types of letters did much to change his basic views towards China and Chiang.

As Marshall set about his work in China, the former Ambassador (Hurley) was called to testify before Congress. Representative Mike Mansfield asked "why we continue to intervene in what many of us consider to be a purely Chinese internal problem?"²³ Hurley responded by

informing him of the support being given to the Chinese Communists by the Russians and presenting a strange analogy to the Congressman. "The only difference between the Chinese Communists and Oklahoma Republicans is that the Oklahoma Republicans are not armed!"²⁴ These types of comments coupled with his distinctive Choctaw war whoops gave Hurley a colorful if not eccentric reputation in government circles. Hurley went on to praise Wedemeyer and Stilwell and implied that if these men could not bring the Kuomintang and the Communists together it could not be done.

Hurley's recall put an end to a lot of the in-fighting amongst State Department people in China. John F. Melby, a Foreign Service Officer in China from 1945 to 1948, noted that Hurley was a "vain and self-important man who was ill-suited for the job".²⁵ He was not alone in this thinking. Ambassador Philip D. Sprouse, then a Foreign Service Officer in the American Consulate, agreed that Hurley was "an absolute disaster, ignorant arrogant and bombastic...a fool in some ways."²⁶ With the arrival of Marshall these two men and the forces within the Consulate that they represented, could focus on the task at hand and not worry about Hurley anymore.

With Marshall busily trying to bring about agreement between the Communists and Nationalists, and carrying the rank of Ambassador, he nevertheless thought about who

Hurley's permanent replacement should be. He approached Wedemeyer who thought that he could make a genuine contribution but was wary of resigning his commission in the Army. Marshall encouraged him and Wedemeyer agreed to serve. Marshall cabled the President suggesting Wedemeyer for the job.²⁷

Wedemeyer took what he thought was a temporary leave from China in May 1946 for minor surgery on a sinus problem at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC. Following surgery he set about outfitting himself with the necessary accoutrements for his forthcoming position. Meanwhile news of his impending job as Ambassador leaked to the press. The Chinese Communists expressed concern to Marshall that Wedemeyer's opinion of them and their legitimacy was well known and that he could hardly expect to be impartial in his position as Ambassador. Marshall agreed and cabled the President asking that the nomination be put on hold.

Truman, rather than postpone the inevitable, pulled Wedemeyer from consideration altogether at that time. Dean Acheson, then Under Secretary of State, relayed the decision to Wedemeyer who commented that he didn't care for the fact that the (Chinese) Communists had the power to influence decisions within our government.²⁸ Dr. J. Leighton Stuart instead was named Ambassador. An old China hand, Stuart would figure in the subsequent return of Wedemeyer to China.

As the Summer of 1946 wore on, Marshall grew increasingly frustrated over his inability to bring about a solution to the civil war. At one point he had both sides agreeing on a cease fire during which all parties would stand in place. The Nationalists however stalled in signing the document until they had captured specific territory. The Communists were livid. Chou En-lai said that the Nationalists spoke of peace but their actions spoke of war.

Philip Sprouse had been pushing for all aid to be tied to specific reforms enacted by the Nationalists. He had been an advocate of this line of thought for some time but now that little else seemed to be working, Marshall considered it again.²² Wedemeyer, though back in the United States commanding Second Army in Baltimore, figured in the equation once more.

When the Germans had surrendered, the Allies had captured large stocks of arms and ammunition. Much of it was 7.92mm, a caliber unique to the Germans and the foreign troops they had trained over the previous 10-15 years. One country's army they had trained was that of the Nationalist Chinese. Wedemeyer recommended, through then Army Chief of Staff General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower, that a shipload of these captured stocks be given to the Chinese. This would be in response to their requests for more military aid. The recommendation was approved and a

shipload of 20,000 rifles and a vast store of ammunition left for China. As the ship made its way to the Far East, the decision was reversed and on orders from the White House, the rifles and the ammunition were destroyed.³⁰

Marshall took the situation one step further and imposed an arms embargo (which included ammunition), on the Nationalist government. The United States had supplied the Chinese with \$870 million worth of Lend-Lease military equipment during World War II. From V-J Day through the imposition of the embargo in mid-1946 the figure was approximately \$600 million. Now the flow stopped altogether. It should be noted that the bulk of the post-WWII amount came in the form of transportation to aid in the repatriation of the Japanese.³¹ Nonetheless, these were desperate times reasoned Marshall, and they called for desperate measures.

Marshall labored for several more months trying to get the Communist and the Nationalist Chinese together but to no avail. He was so frustrated that he thought further efforts at unification were futile. He commented on leaving China, "a plague on both your houses. You're both double crossing me! What's the idea of flogging a dead horse?"³²

ENDNOTES

Chapter Four FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE

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CHAPTER 5

WEDEMEYER'S FINAL ATTEMPT TO SAVE CHINA

Political pressure can sometimes account for some curious decisions. Truman and Marshall, now Secretary of State, were feeling the heat to do something to save China. Strong pro-China lobbying on the part of influential Congressmen and private citizens was having an impact. These factors would contribute to induce Wedemeyer's return to China.

After Marshall departed China, the senior man on the ground was Ambassador Stuart. He was no newcomer to China as previously mentioned, and had watched Marshall toil at his task. Stuart had very specific feelings on the state of affairs in China and on the prospects for a true democratic coalition. He predicted that if allowed into the government, the Communists would eventually grow to control it. Then, under their control,

"will follow the invariable Communist pattern of a police state, with no freedom of action and with brutal slaughter or expropriation of all that seems to be in their way."¹

By April 1947 the situation for the Nationalist army had grown increasingly bleak. A former translator and liaison officer with Marshall's Mission, General Yu Tai-wei, now the Vice Minister of Defense for Arms, pleaded for help.² The army was seeing their stores of arms and ammunition dwindle and they had no ready way to replenish them. The economy was such that the Nationalist currency was virtually worthless abroad and they had few other means to buy foreign military supplies. Marshall, by now the Secretary of State, denied Yu's request. The embargo stood.

Humanitarian aid was still flowing into China through the United Nations Relief and Recovery Administration (UNRRA). The United States' portion of this aid amounted to \$474 million. But even this aid, purely humanitarian in nature was mismanaged by the Nationalists. As reported by Michael C. Grenata (LTC, U.S. Army, Retired), in a letter to President Truman,

"the UNRRA supplies do not go directly to the people for who they are intended. They go to Nationalist Chinese officials who decide who gets what in proportion to their loyalty to the government. Furthermore, the relief agency must pay a tax on these relief items. In effect they (UNRRA) are made to pay for the privilege of donating emergency supplies to the Chinese people!"³

Pressure was beginning to mount on President Truman to change his "wait and see" policy toward China. Two of the most vocal pro-China Lobby in Congress, Senator Arthur

H. Vandenburg and Representative Walter Judd urged a fresh assessment of the situation.⁴ Ambassador Stuart was hardly the man to rely on to give it. By this time he was 71 years old and in deteriorating health. The State Department asked that the President appoint an envoy to go and take a look. On the military side of things, the situation was reportedly getting more and more desperate all the time for the Nationalists. This should have been of little surprise to anyone, due to the arms embargo which was now more than 12 months old.

The Secretary of War was being apprised of the military situation through the American officers still in China. He in turn recommended that our official attitude towards the Chinese change and proposed a "carefully planned, selective and well-supervised (program of) military assistance."⁵ At this crucial point in the civil war, Spring 1947, Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson felt,

"a mere strong statement of support for the Nationalists by the Americans would [have] be[en] a tremendous boost and a small amount of military assistance may [have] produce[d] a decisive military victory."⁶

But it was not to be.

President Truman decided instead to accept the State Department recommendation (of Assistant Secretary of State John Carter Vincent), to send a Presidential Envoy to

reassess the situation. Marshall nominated Wedemeyer and noted that he had the background necessary to make comments as to how the current state of affairs compared with that of the recent past. Marshall further saw it as a way of giving an immediate boost to sagging morale within the Nationalist Chinese government. Wedemeyer was called in to Marshall's State Department office and given a general briefing of what he was expected to do. This was verbal in nature as the formal drafting of the actual mission document would be up to Wedemeyer to compose.

The official directive as signed by President Truman told Wedemeyer to "proceed to China without delay to appraise the political, military, economic and psychological status - current and projected."⁷ Wedemeyer collected his staff (Table 12) which included the previously mentioned Philip Sprouse from the State Department, and Mark Watson and Brad Connors who were his Administrative Assistants. They arrived in China on 22 July 1947 and were met by Nationalist officials at the Ta Ch'iao (Big Bridge) airfield at Nanking. The general feeling among the Chinese seemed to be that Wedemeyer's arrival was to signal the re-initiation of American aid.

Wedemeyer's initial impressions were recorded in a letter to Secretary of State Marshall dated 29 July 1947. In it he immediately noted the marked deterioration of the economic and military state of the Nationalists and noted

TABLE 12
Members of the Wedemeyer Mission
(July - September 1947)

LTG Albert C. Wedemeyer.....	Special Representative of the President of the United States
CPT James J. Boyle.....	Aide-de-Camp, Secretary War Department
CPT Horace Eng.....	Aide-de-Camp, Interpreter War Department
LTC Claire E. Hutchin, Jr.....	Military Advisor War Department
Mr. David R. Jenkins.....	Fiscal Advisor Treasury Department
Mr. Philip D. Sprouse.....	Political Advisor State Department
RADM Carl A. Trexel.....	Engineering Advisor Navy Department
Mr. Melville H. Walker.....	Economic Advisor State Department
Mr. Mark S. Watson.....	Press and Public Affairs Advisor, Baltimore Sun Baltimore, MD

Source: United States Department of State White Paper on China, 1949, 765.

that recent Communist successes have induced high morale on their side. Chiang's brother-in-law and President of the Executive Yuan, T.V. Soong stated to Wedemeyer that "if your mission fails, the fall of the Chinese (Nationalist) government will be inevitable." Clearly Wedemeyer was viewed by some influential Chinese as the last great hope for the Nationalist regime.

As Wedemeyer moved about the country, he talked to citizens on all levels of the social scale. He received several thousand letters and reports, many of them anonymous letters damning the Nationalist regime for their inefficiency and inability to adequately govern the country. It is interesting to note that in a country where the citizens were going hungry, the government still found money to repair roads they planned to have Wedemeyer drive down and money was even found to plant a new lawn in front of a government building in Mukden.*

One of the most alarming discoveries was of the high level of corruption within the Army. The Nationalist soldiers were moving into areas of the country and systematically looting and pillaging them. The local populace were prepared for harsh treatment from the Communists but had expected friendly cooperation from the Nationalist Government officials and troops. Further the soldiers were often arrogant, discourteous and assumed the attitude of conquerors.¹⁰ The impression was being

formed by all elements of the mission that while the Chinese people did not want to be Communists, they resented the carpetbagging tactics of the Nationalist military and civilian leaders.

The Communists had a field day with Wedemeyer's mission and produced propaganda that decried him as a Nazi with strong ties to Germany. He was put down in the Communist newspaper as a "sop" of Chiang and the message was carried on their radio stations as well. Slogans conveying the message "Down with American Imperialism" were seen during Wedemeyer's travels to Communist controlled areas. He toured schools and noted that the curriculum included Soviet-Russian instruction in Marxism-Stalinism and held little value for American-British so-called Imperialism. Clearly the influence of the Russians was being felt.

Against this well-established and well-planned assault by the Communists to win the hearts and minds of the people, the Nationalists looked inept. In a meeting with American officials at the U.S. Embassy in China, Wedemeyer was given a no-holds-barred brief on the deteriorating situation in country. Raymond Ludden (First Secretary at the American Embassy), Carl H. Beohringer (Assistant Commerce Secretary), and BG Thomas B. Timberman (Military Advisor to the Ambassador), told Wedemeyer that the "Nationalist leadership was fantastically inept, and

reluctant to accept advice either in tactics or strategy." This included advice in military or economic matters.¹¹

Wedemeyer was once again to experience this sort of reluctance during one of the frequent meetings he held with Chiang during his visit. On 10 August he attempted to persuade Chiang on the urgency to reform. Specifically he cited the area of the military as a good place to start. He recommended a merit system for promotion to all ranks but especially within the officer corps. He recommended an end to the favoritism shown the wealthy in placing their sons in positions of authority rather than having them earn their way. He further asked for an end to the interference with the field from the seat of government. This continued to be a problem for the field commanders. These recommendations were almost identical to those Wedemeyer had been espousing for more than a year as the China Theater Commander.¹²

One of the Mission's members who recalled one of these meetings between Wedemeyer and Chiang, John Melby, later recalled a lack of follow-through on the part of Chiang.

"Wedemeyer would ask Chiang Kai-shek for concessions and Chiang Kai-shek would agree but not implement. He, (Chiang), had a Confucian-Feudal mentality in that he was incapable of thinking beyond what he did understand, mainly manipulating or maneuvering with the warlord cliques."¹³

This mentality had not changed during the previous period Wedemeyer had spent with Chiang, so it may have been naive

on the part of the Americans, to suppose it would magically change now.

Wedemeyer's travels about the country took him to Shanghai, Taiwan and Canton during mid-August. He focused on business leaders and was alarmed to find that the foreign businesses had been gradually nationalized in those areas by Chiang. Those foreign businesses that remained were ill-at-ease with respect to their projected ability to maintain their independent status. The Finance Ministry apparently thought that by nationalizing the firms, the short run gain of capital would pave the way for long term stability. In fact what happened was that more foreign firms who might have been predisposed to come to China and invest in her economic rebirth, were driven away by fears that any investments would be lost in the power grab by the Nationalists.

Equally alarming was the fact that in these areas where there was little Communist influence, Wedemeyer found the same Nationalist ruthlessness against the local people. Instead of consolidating the areas in which they held control, the Nationalists seemed unable to control themselves. Wedemeyer placed the blame on the close group of advisors that surrounded Chiang. In a letter to Henry Luce (head of the Time-Life corporation), written during this period he stated,

"I doubt Chiang knows the true situation - his advisors refuse to tell him. They are afraid to, to do so would reveal their incompetence or their corrupt practices."¹⁴

This expression of faith in Chiang seems to be indicative of Wedemeyer's opinion of him and his potential to have a positive affect on the situation.

During his final meeting with Chiang on 22 August, Wedemeyer took the opportunity to speak frankly and came away with the impression that it had done some good. Chiang asked him to speak in private to 60 of the top Kuomintang leaders the following day. Wedemeyer was reluctant to do so but through encouragement by Chiang, agreed to do so. Chiang may have envisioned the talk as tonic to jolt these subordinates into action or he may have been trying to shift responsibility to Wedemeyer. He wanted Wedemeyer to speak as candidly to them as he had to him. Later that evening Chiang related a request to Ambassador Stuart that Wedemeyer tone down his remarks somewhat so as not to offend his audience. For reasons unknown to this day, the request never got to Wedemeyer.

The speech, given in closed session on 23 August 1947, was a disaster. It accomplished few of the positive things the Generalissimo had envisioned. Rather than jolt them into action to solve some of their problems, it allowed them to focus on Wedemeyer and his candid (but perhaps in their view discourteous), expression of them.

Further, Chiang thought that Wedemeyer had ignored his caution issued through Stuart and this angered Chiang even more. In fact Chiang was so offended that he excused himself from a dinner to be given in Wedemeyer's honor that evening. In response Wedemeyer asked that it be cancelled.¹⁵ The Presidential Envoy was in a quandary - what to do about his farewell remarks at the airport departure ceremony?

Mark Watson, his assistant and Public Affairs Officer for the trip, suggested a bland "thank you for your hospitality" type speech that would further ruffle no one's feathers. Wedemeyer was inclined to give a more forthright speech. He pondered the political implications of both courses of action and decided in favor of candor. His speech caught the attention of both the Nationalists and Communists but for very different reasons. While toned down from the version he had delivered the day before, the speech was still rather vehement in its remonstrance of the corruption in the Nationalist government.

"The existing government," he stated, "can win and retain the undivided, enthusiastic support of the bulk of the Chinese people by removing incompetent and/or corrupt people who now occupy many positions of responsibility. The Central (Nationalist) Government will have to put into effect immediately drastic and far-reaching political and economic reforms. It should be accepted that military force in itself will not eliminate Communism."¹⁶

It would be a speech that Wedemeyer would regret giving.

In his memoirs, Wedemeyer stated that he wishes he had heeded the advice of Watson, but stood by the substance of his remarks. The critics, in the United States of the General and his stance on China, would have a field day. They would undoubtedly second guess his approach to the problem and of course question the soundness of the President even sending him in the first place! But the General was at peace with himself as he left China for what would be the last time on 24 August 1947. With him were three trunks marked "Top Secret" that contained the substance for his report to the President.¹⁷

The Wedemeyer Mission included a similar fact-finding stop in Korea with the same general mission statement. Enroute to Korea he stopped in Tokyo and visited General Douglas MacArthur. Upon returning to the United States, he sequestered himself in an office in the State Department and composed his official report. It was delivered to Marshall at the State Department on 18 September 1947. Wedemeyer remained in the area to be available to answer questions or clarify portions of the report, but after some time asked for an assignment from the Chief of Staff (Eisenhower). Wedemeyer was made the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Combat Operations at the Department of the Army in the Pentagon, a job he was to hold for two years.¹⁸

The report circulated in closed circles in the State Department and at the White House. On the recommendation of Marshall, President Truman designated the report "Top Secret" and ordered no discussion with the press. During this period Wedemeyer was asked to testify before Congress and had to avoid answering several questions due to the Presidential order of secrecy. This made some of the pro-China lobby even more determined to get at the Report and they lobbied hard for it to be made public. Truman held fast. The reason was the substance of the recommendations that the report contained.

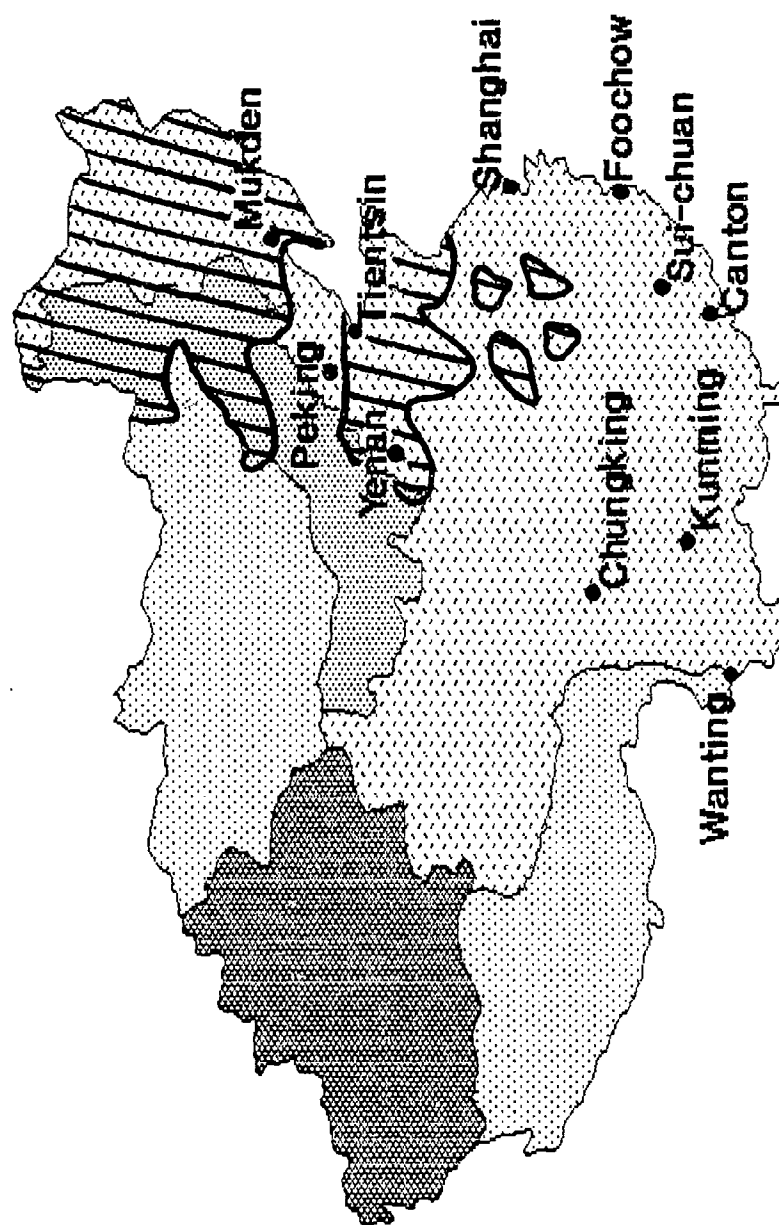
The major recommendations were:

a. That the U.S. provide, as early as practicable, moral, advisory and material support to China in order to prevent Manchuria from becoming a Soviet satellite, to bolster opposition to Communist expansion (Table 13) and to contribute to the gradual development of stability in China.

b. That China be advised to request the United Nations take immediate steps to bring about a cessation of hostilities in Manchuria, and that Manchuria be placed under a trusteeship in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

c. That China give continuing evidence that urgently required military reforms are being implemented.

TABLE 13
 Situation in China
 (December 1947)



/// Communist held areas

d. That China be assisted in her efforts to obtain ammunition immediately.

e. That military advice and supervision be extended in scope to include field forces, training centers and particularly, logistics centers.¹⁹

The recommendation to keep the report secret may have originated in the Office of Political Affairs at the State Department. The office was directed by Dean Rusk who had served under Wedemeyer in China during the war as a member of his strategic plans group. Rusk did not support the introduction of the UN into Manchuria, figuring it would mean a substantial infusion of American troops.²⁰ Clearly the political situation in the United States at the time, would not have supported sending troops back overseas so soon after the end of World War II.

The State Department estimated that to implement the recommendations called for in Wedemeyer's Report, would carry a price tag of more than \$2 billion over three years.²¹ With the stated focus of the United States on Europe and the Middle East, China was the odd man out. The hefty price tag of men and money sealed the fate of the report. It was due to be classified until the Summer of 1949. It caused brief interest to be rekindled in the subject when it was finally released. But by then Nationalist China was on the verge of falling and the report and its recommendations were a moot point.

Wedemeyer was called to testify once again before the Senate Appropriations Committee in December 1947. Though still under the Presidential directive to protect the secrecy of the report, he admitted that he "emphatically disassociated himself from the Administration's policy of refusal to supply arms and ammunition to the Nationalist Chinese."²² By and large Wedemeyer slipped into relative obscurity after that as he continued in his position in the Pentagon. He closed out his active military career in the Summer of 1951, as the Commanding General of Sixth Army in the Presidio of San Francisco.

Privately however, Wedemeyer harbored some misgivings about the manner in which his efforts seemed to have all gone for naught. In a personal letter to MacArthur he stated, "Truman is a little man in a big job." And in reference to Truman's reluctance to provide aid to China he related that the decision was at the "bottom of the economic barrel."²³ It wouldn't be until a decade later that Wedemeyer would grant interviews and specifically detail his role in China.

ENDNOTES

Chapter Five WEDEMEYER'S FINAL ATTEMPT TO SAVE CHINA

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⁷Directive, President Truman to General Wedemeyer, 09 Jul 1947, President's Secretary's File, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO.

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⁹"China," Newsweek 30 (01 September 1947): 38.

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¹²Steuck, 40.

¹³John F. Melby, interview by Robert Accinelli, 7-14-21 November 1986, Oral History Collection, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO.

¹⁴Steuck, 74.

¹⁵Steuck, 44.

¹⁶"Foreign News - China," Time (15 September 1947): 33.

¹⁷Newsweek, 01 Sep 47.

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¹⁹Albert C. Wedemeyer, Wedemeyer Reports! (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1958), 74.

²⁰Steuck, 88.

²¹Steuck, 92.

²²Utley, 79.

²³Steuck, 98

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Having reviewed the better part of four years in the professional life of General Wedemeyer, it is important to develop conclusions about his work during this period. It is perhaps unrealistic to expect someone to objectively evaluate their own performance. It is left to us then, to analyze Wedemeyer's mission and performance in each of the positions he held in China. We can take from this analysis lessons as important today as they were in 1947. By thoroughly examining these lessons, their value to the officer of today will be apparent.

Commander, China Theater of Operations

Upon receiving notice of his assignment as the Commander of the China Theater of Operations and Chief of Staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, General Wedemeyer was told his mission was as follows:

1. Prevent the collapse of the Nationalist Chinese Government.

2. Keep the Chinese in the war against Japan.
3. Harmonize relations between the Chinese and American military.
4. Unify the anti-Japanese forces in China.¹

Did he accomplish his overall mission? NO.

Wedemeyer and the Americans prevented the collapse of the Nationalist government in the short run. However, they may have only been delaying the inevitable. Chiang Kai-shek carefully played the various political and military instruments at his disposal to the maximum benefit of his personal agenda. His appearance was that of a person very much interested in the wisdom and experience of Wedemeyer, but he enacted very little of what he was exposed to. A certain number of the gains Wedemeyer made with Chiang must be tempered with the idea that Chiang may have been balancing those economic and military gains with what he could have attained through agreement with the Japanese. In the long run Chiang probably figured he had more to gain by staying with the winning side, namely the Americans. In coercing Chiang into choosing the winning side, Wedemeyer helped prevent the collapse of the pro-Allied Nationalist government.

Success in the second facet of the mission was a continual process that necessitated the placement of

Americans at every level of the Chinese Combat Command (Table 7). From the battalion level through to Wedemeyer's level at the top of the theater, American liaison teams insured that the Chinese commanders had the very best tactical thought at their disposal. This is not to say that it was always applied, in fact it wasn't. However, the liaison system when coupled with the training and improved living standards of the Chinese soldiers, produced a force that was at least a match for the depleted Japanese forces they faced in the last year of World War II. Politically, the Americans made it far more attractive for the Chinese to stay in the war against the Japanese than to attempt to negotiate a treaty with them. It has been pointed out that this helped engage more than 1,000,000 Japanese soldiers occupying China who could have otherwise been brought to bear elsewhere in the Pacific.

Harmony between the Chinese and American military forces may have been one of sheer convenience for the Chinese. They were getting the bulk of their military supplies from the Americans and as such, had much to gain through promotion of that harmonious relationship. Wedemeyer's attitude toward the promotion of the Chinese in briefings and at conferences, made for an improved climate in the theater. When he took command, this was clearly an area where improvement was needed and it was achieved.

The inability of Wedemeyer to effect the unification of the Nationalists and the Communists accounts for the overall negative assessment of his mission accomplishment. At times unification seemed tantalizingly close. The personal agendas of the two major parties, however, realistically precluded unification. This is a fact that becomes clear now with the benefit of hindsight, but unification may have seemed practically obtainable in 1944. There were other failures that could be addressed here, but they are relatively minor compared to the unity issue. As history records, Wedemeyer, like Marshall before him, was in fine company in his failure to adapt a Western solution to a Chinese problem.

Presidential Envoy

In a letter dated July 9, 1947, President Truman named General Wedemeyer as a Presidential Envoy with the rank of Ambassador. He was directed to go to China (and Korea) and "appraise the economic, psychological and military situation - current and projected."² He accomplished this mission in an efficient and organized fashion. Wedemeyer systematically sought to interview representatives of the various factions in the country and a healthy cross-section of the population. He sought out opinions from the leaders and the common people. He meticulously let the area experts that accompanied him,

develop facts in each of their areas and assured that all his recommendations were factually supportable. That his recommendations were not accepted does not detract from the factual nature or overall value of his report. The recommendations were simply not the right ones politically at the time. In the post-WWII United States there was a finite amount of money to be spent on foreign aid and priorities had to be established. China with her estimated \$2 billion price tag was too low on the priority scale and too expensive. It is irrelevant to debate here whether China could have been saved for less. The fact is it wasn't.

Lessons Learned

Lessons that the professional officer can take from this study can be categorized as either personal or national in nature. Both will be discussed in turn. First the personal:

1. Know your mission.
2. If you need further guidance, ask for it.
3. If you do your job, your performance and accomplishments will speak for themselves.
4. Be candid at all times.

Wedemeyer had a clearly defined mission as he entered China in 1944. As the war ended and the end state that the United States desired in China became unclear, he

asked for clarification. This ties in neatly with the second lesson. As the tasks of accepting the surrender of the Japanese and not aiding the Nationalists in their struggle against the Communist came into conflict, Wedemeyer asked for clarification. Regardless of an officer's position in the Army, he will always have a superior to report to. If unclear as to what to do or how to do it, ask for clarification.

On the subject of performance, Wedemeyer was assigned as the Theater Commander in China mostly because of his demonstrated performance in positions of great responsibility. His promotion rate as a result was phenomenal even in the context of accelerated wartime promotions.

Finally on the subject of candor. Marshall once cautioned Wedemeyer that "you'll do me a grave disservice if you ever fail to give me less than your honest view on a topic."³ A professional officer can possess few traits more valuable than candor. This goes beyond simply telling the truth. It includes the presentation of facts as they are regardless of their political popularity with the boss. In Wedemeyer's case, he had two bosses, President Truman and General Marshall. Wedemeyer's recommendations on specific issues didn't always agree with theirs. But they could trust that his recommendations were made in a logical manner and with the benefit of all the facts he could bring

to bear on the subject. Candor also includes the ability to be honest with yourself. In one of his last appearances before Congress, Wedemeyer said humbly, "I've been wrong before, I can be wrong again."⁴

On the national level, an analysis of the performance of the United States in China during this same time period (1944-7), yields some valuable lessons as well. It is interesting to look at the experience in terms found in a report produced in 1988 by the Regional Conflict Working Group (RCWG).⁵ This group developed a series of recommendations for the reform of the security assistance program of the United States. By analyzing the performance of Wedemeyer and the United States in the context of four of the RCWG's recommendations, a more contemporary set of lessons learned result.

The four chosen for analysis are:

1. Centrality of intelligence.
2. The value of multi-year appropriations.
3. Perception of commitment.
4. Promotion of self-sufficiency.

Examination of the first, shows that the China Theater as modified organizationally under Wedemeyer enjoyed centrality of intelligence. The OSS' network of operatives throughout China and Wedemeyer's organic Army intelligence collection assets, were able to provide the data necessary for timely tactical decision making.

But as outlined in Chapter 2, this information was not always capitalized on by Chiang Kai-shek.

The second and third facets were closely aligned in China. America's commitment to stand by China during World War II, manifested itself in enormous expenditures on Lend-Lease and other social and military assistance. What the United States meant as short term assistance to the Chinese, the Chinese took for granted. As a result, plans were not put into place by the Chinese to fend for themselves once World War II ended and their pipeline of U.S. assistance was stopped. Clearly the inability of the Chinese to recognize the limits of this multi-year commitment, caused them to suffer greatly from their unpreparedness.

The capstone lesson learned is one of the promotion of self-sufficiency. Wedemeyer promoted this in the Chinese Theater but it was not ultimately achieved. The responsibility for the Chinese' inability to become self-sufficient belongs to Chiang Kai-shek. His inability to make sound strategic, operational and tactical decisions cost Nationalist China dearly in its civil war with the Communists.

Wedemeyer summarized his performance by saying, "In my heart and mind I feel I have conducted myself in the best interest of my country and of the bulk of the Chinese people."*

That is perhaps the biggest lesson the professional officer can take from this study: Do your best and be at peace with yourself over your performance.

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Chapter Six CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

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